

Socialist Worker

For a socialist alternative to New Labour

80p

PUBLIC BACKING GROWS AS FIRST NATIONAL DISPUTE IN 25 YEARS LOOMS

**‘We’re ready to strike!’
say firefighters after
mass protest**

see page 2



Picture: JESS HURD www.reportdigital.co.uk

Rifts in the Bush camp... Splits in the cabinet... Rows between Europe's leaders... 71 percent oppose a US attack

WE CAN STOP WAR AGAINST IRAQ

Just three weeks to go

**NATIONAL
DEMONSTRATION**

Assemble 12.30pm, Embankment

Called by the Stop the War Coalition
and Muslim Association of Britain. Supported by CND

Saturday
28 Sept
London

DISCONTENT GROWS OVER PUBLIC SECTOR PAY

LONDON UNDERGROUND

THERE ARE a series of pay disputes across the public sector.

Tube workers voted by four to one this week for strikes over pay.

Their action is closely linked to resisting privatisation and attacks on safety standards, which led to a one-day strike by members of the RMT union in July.

COUNCIL WORKERS

ACTIVISTS ARE arguing to reject a shoddy deal agreed by their union leaders after a magnificent one-day strike of over 750,000 workers in July.

In London council unions have given employers until next Thursday to come up with a major increase in allowances for working in the capital.

There is talk of a one-day strike on 1 October, the day of Tony Blair's speech to the Labour Party conference, if that does not happen.

COLLEGE LECTURERS

MEMBERS OF the Natfhe union return to further education colleges in England and Wales this week. They are still in the middle of a national pay dispute.

The employers made an insulting 1.5 percent offer, which led to a two-day national strike earlier this year.

Natfhe general secretary Paul Mackney called for a strike on 1 October before the summer break. But there are suggestions from union officials of delaying any strike until after 5 November.

College support staff are also balloting for strikes over pay.

UNIVERSITIES

LECTURERS AND support staff remain in dispute over this year's pay award. Support staff in the "old" universities (ones that were not previously polytechnics) in London are balloting for strikes over London allowance payments.

They could also take action on 1 October.

TEACHERS

THE GOVERNMENT wants to worsen and extend the payment by results scheme it imposed on teachers in England and Wales.

At the same time it has not met union calls for easing bureaucracy and workload.

The campaign for a £6,000 London allowance payment, which led to a highly successful strike before Easter, is continuing.

There is a mood for further action.

But there is also a serious danger that union leaders will abandon the campaign.

All these disputes are a sign of the mood for action over pay.

There is so much support for the firefighters because everybody feels under the same pressures.

That general feeling has also fuelled calls for united action by the unions. The teachers' strike before Easter encouraged council workers in London to take action over the same issue.

The strike by tube workers coincided with a national council workers' strike and was all the stronger for it.

Action by several groups of workers on, say, 1 October, would strengthen every fight and increase the pressure on the government.

Firefighters now head up a wider battle

FIREFIGHTERS AND control room staff are heading for their first national strikes for 25 years. They are at the forefront of a mood for action over pay across the public sector.

Over 10,000 firefighters blocked the streets outside parliament on Monday as their employers refused to come up with a reasonable pay offer at last ditch talks.

On the same day firefighters in about 30 brigades in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Northants, Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire and other areas took industrial action without a ballot and answered only 999 calls.

Confidence, determination and the spirit seen on anti-capitalist protests such as Genoa and Seville shone through the rally outside Westminster Central Hall. It was less a lobby, more like a siege.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) will hold a special conference next week to agree to have a ballot for

'OF COURSE no one chooses to strike, but we've had enough. Support for action has grown and grown over the last few months as we've campaigned. Our pay has fallen behind under the formula devised 25 years ago. The public support us.'

ALAN BLACKLEE, firefighter from Cleveland

national strikes.

The message was the same from every group of firefighters and control room staff on Monday: "We are up for it."

Andy Gilchrist, FBU general secretary, told the cheering rally, "The employers have again refused to tell us what you are worth."

"They are talking of a 4 percent increase and an inquiry. And they want

to link that to attacks on conditions.

"Your conditions are not up for grabs or discussion.

"We have exhausted the opportunities for talks.

"We now have a different approach. Your annual conference passed a resolution instructing us what to do.

"The executive committee has just met and has decided to recall the conference with a recommendation for national strike action over pay."

That was greeted with wild applause, cheering and shouts of, "Out, out, out!"

A recent poll found two thirds of people believe firefighters are underpaid and 71 percent support their claim for an increase to £30,000 a year.

The Ministry of Defence said on Monday that it is training 650 extra troops to scab on the strike in addition to 2,000 who are already trained.

The battle lines are being drawn. Everyone should back the firefighters.



COUNCIL WORKERS are still fighting over London weighting

Welcome words, time for action

LEFT WING general secretaries from other unions were at the firefighters' rally.

Bob Crow from the rail workers' RMT union sent a clear message. If the FBU is on strike, his members will not be working on certain categories of stations, which include the tube.

Mick Rix from the train drivers' Aslef union told the rally, "If safety is to be compromised then we won't be driving the trains as well."

Jeremy Dear from the National Union of Journalists said there is money to pay the firefighters' claim because "in the last 25 years thousands of millionaires have been created."

"The rich have had tax breaks. What kind of society hands millions to speculators in the City of London

and denies our firefighters and control room staff a living wage?"

Billy Hayes from the Communication Workers Union said, "We never hear there's not enough money to bomb and kill people."

"If there is enough money to go to war, there is enough money to pay the firefighters."

All those speakers pledged financial support for any firefighters' strike.

Billy Hayes and Mick Rix told *Socialist Worker* that the firefighters could be "absolutely guaranteed" wider trade union support.

Those words should be matched by every trade union leader at the TUC next week, and they should all turn them into real acts of solidarity.

Driven from jobs

THE government's own Audit Commission is warning of an exodus of public sector workers.

Many are leaving because they are disillusioned with long hours, low pay and constant pressure from managers.

The commission found that nearly 80 percent of people who leave public sector jobs say that bureaucracy and paperwork are reasons for going.

That red tape is a result of an endless stream of initiatives from the government, which are usually tied up with the private sector.

Nearly 70 percent of workers were driven out by the lack of resources, which stopped them from doing jobs such as teaching, nursing and social work effectively.

And one in three said low pay was the major reason.

It's not a fair cop

A FULLY qualified firefighter gets just £21,531 a year.

There are no extra payments for working shifts round the clock. They do a 42-hour week.

There are no annual salary increments. And firefighters risk their lives every single day.

Control room staff get 92 percent of a firefighter's pay.

One in five full time firefighters are forced to take a second job to survive.

Police constables outside London are on £23,323 a year for a 36.2-hour week—before whopping overtime pay, which home secretary David Blunkett preserved in his review of police pay.

After 14 years police on the bottom grade are on £29,062 basic.

Police in London get £6,111 extra for working in the capital and free transport within a 73-mile radius.

The Fire Brigades Union is calling for a rise in basic pay to £30,000 a year.

The spirit of revolt

FIREFIGHTERS GOT a glimpse of their power and of the energy of rank and file union members at this week's rally.

Thousands of them followed activists carrying the FBU's London region banner for an impromptu march.

The police, all smiles before then, tried to stop them, but were brushed aside.

Traffic ground to a halt as thousands of firefighters sat down outside parliament.

Neil Macpherson, secretary of Mid and West Wales FBU, said, "The executive of the union has initiated this campaign and done a very good job."

"The mood of confidence has now grown up from the grassroots.

"People are in no mood to accept a poor deal.

"It's not just us. I was out on a job with two paramedics. They said they hope we win, because if we do they will be up for a fight over pay too."



STOP THE WAR DEMO, SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

Transport from all over Britain

CAMPAIGNERS in the Stop the War Coalition are uniting with local groups to get transport from across Britain to the 28 September demonstration.

●A 640-seat train is running through Glasgow and Edinburgh to the march. A further five coaches are booked from Edinburgh, and transport is organised from Greenock, Fife, Aberdeen and Dundee. ●In Runcorn, in the north west of England, and Bristol the postal workers' CWU union is running its own coaches to the demonstration.

●In Cardiff the CWU union has given £200 to help fund transport from the area.

●Around 100 coaches are booked from Birmingham. Around £10,000 has been raised to pay for billboard and newspaper adverts in the run-up to the demonstration.

Bill Challis, branch secretary of Sandwell Labour Party, explained why he was helping build the demonstration:

"We have mailed members about the march. From soundings I've taken inside the Labour Party, people cannot

stomach a war and some are going to leave the party.

"It's a crunch point for many of them. Blair isn't listening to people inside the party or in Britain. The demonstration is to make clear to him we don't want war on Iraq."

●Some eight coaches are booked from Liverpool. Morag Reid, a local campaigner, said, "At our weekly stall on a Saturday we get a really good response. There is a massive well of opposition to the war."

●Around a dozen coaches are booked from Sheffield.

Abdul Shaif reported, "I've not seen as positive a response before. There seems to be much more opposition to a war on Iraq. We have to show it is too much of a risk for Blair to back Bush's war."

More coaches are booked in towns and cities across Britain. They include Thanet, Medway and Canterbury in Kent, Luton, Watford, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Northampton, Milton Keynes, larger cities like Newcastle, Manchester and Leeds, and many other areas.

A YEAR SINCE 11 SEPTEMBER...

Remember ALL of the victims

THE GOVERNMENT is pushing for a minute's silence to mark the anniversary of the 11 September attacks next Wednesday.

People will want to mark the pain and anguish of a day which saw almost 3,000 people killed in New York.

But Tony Blair has his own agenda. He wants to exploit the anniversary to boost support for Bush's plans to launch war on Iraq.

There have been many other victims in the year since 11 September.

The verified death toll as a direct result of US and British bombing in Afghanistan is over 3,100, with many more victims still unaccounted for.

Israeli troops have killed around 1,200 Palestinians since 11 September, including 11 last weekend, without any condemnation from the US.

In the year since 11 September more than 40,000 Iraqi children will have died as a result of sanctions imposed after the US-led war on Iraq in

1991.

And each day over the last year 19,000 children have died as a result of the debt burden.

Where there is a minute's silence next Wednesday it should mark all these victims. That is not what Blair or Bush will want.

This is because many of these people were victims of the US's global military and economic power.

Bush now wants to use his "war on terror" to ensure many more ordinary people are killed in Iraq.

Some 71 percent of people in Britain oppose an attack on Iraq, according to research for the Daily Mirror and GMTV.

The most fitting tribute to all those who died on 11 September and have died since would be to build on that mood and ensure that such a war, with the horror and the victims it will create, is prevented.

The key step in achieving that is to make the 28 September national demonstration in London a massive peace protest.

'Not in our name'

A YEAR after 11 September we wonder how our loved ones lost on that day would feel about what has been done in their names. What would they think of the rush to military action?

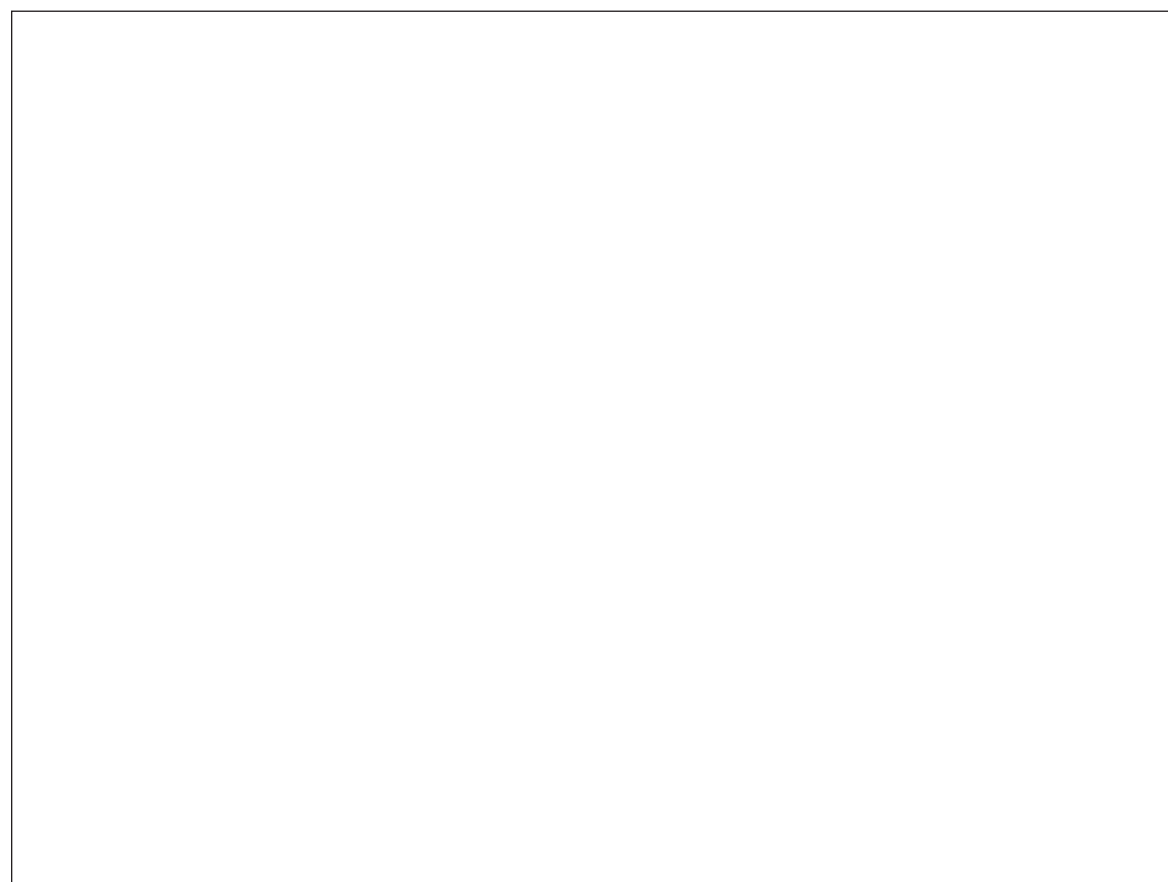
The contemplated invasion of Iraq—a nation that has no proven links to the events of 11 September—in the name of the "war on terrorism" means that

more American service people and more civilians would die.

We need your help to make sure the anniversary of 11 September is not used to promote more war and violence.'

SEPTEMBER ELEVENTH FAMILIES FOR PEACEFUL TOMORROWS, formed from families of people who died on 11 September

EARTH SUMMIT PROTEST



Picture: PA PHOTOS/EPA

UP TO 25,000 people joined a protest march at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg last Saturday. The protesters, mainly poor people from South Africa, were furious at what they branded a "summit of the rich". Some of the protesters carried placards denouncing US president George Bush and Britain's Tony Blair.

SOCIALIST WORKER

We have no multinational corporations bankrolling us and we don't take money off greedy fat cats. We rely on people like you to make sure **SOCIALIST WORKER** comes out each week. We rely on money from individual socialists to pay for those posters, leaflets and stickers we pour out in support of people fighting for a better world.

It's been a busy year for **SOCIALIST WORKER** and it promises to get even busier. That's why we have launched an autumn appeal for **£100,000**. Please help us to reach our target as soon as possible.

£100,000 AUTUMN APPEAL

SEND DONATIONS TO: SW APPEAL, PO BOX 82, LONDON E3 3LH (CHEQUES TO SW APPEAL)
DONATE ONLINE AT WWW.SOCIALISTWORKER.CO.UK OR PHONE 020 7538 2707

Earth Summit

Hot air from world leaders

TONY BLAIR claimed to be leading the world on tackling poverty and environmental destruction at the Earth Summit this week.

The truth is that the summit's outcome represents no progress at all. On key areas it will guarantee things get worse, not better.

That is why 25,000 protesters, mainly the poor of South Africa, defied the police and government and staged an angry march on the summit last Saturday (see report below).

The world leaders' Johannesburg "agreement" is toothless.

On some issues it lists aims, many of which have been promised before.

They have not been delivered despite such pledges. There is little chance of them being met after the summit.

On other issues, such as biochemistry and overseas aid to the poorer countries, the declaration was a retreat from commitments made at the last Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro ten years ago.

No firm targets at all were agreed to boost the use of renewable energy like solar, wind and wave power.

The declaration is much weaker than the promises made at Rio a decade ago in other ways too.

Then agreements were signed which were supposed to lead to enforceable treaties between world governments.

Now that has been ditched. The Johannesburg "agreement" is simply a declaration of intent, with no mechanism for implementing it.

Mark Malloch-Brown is head of the United Nations Development Programme. He admitted, "The international negotiations and governmental declarations will be forgotten within minutes of the ink being signed on the paper."

And he added that the summit was in reality "a great trade fair".

The substance of the summit took place away from the wrangling over the final declaration.

It lay in the drive to further hand the fate of the planet and the world's poor over to big business.

"The substance of the summit was a drive to hand the fate of the planet and world's poor over to big business"

Instead of firm government commitments and regulations, world leaders say we have to look to "partnership" with business.

The *Guardian's* environment correspondent Paul Brown attended the Earth Summit. The "partnerships will see schemes involving water, sanitation and electricity provision", he wrote.

But most depend "on the condition that public services are privatised to the benefit of big business. Tony Blair is a keen advocate of the schemes."

We are to get a global version of the PPP and PFI madness that New Labour is inflicting on public services in Britain.

Some 192 such partnerships were announced at the summit. Full details of many have not yet been made public.

Decade

But one that emerged sums up the summit.

In Rio a decade ago all the world's governments signed up to a deal to tackle child poverty. Ten years on 30,000 children a day die from preventable causes linked to poverty.

The answer proposed at the Earth Summit is an official "partnership" between the UNICEF United Nations children's organisation and McDonald's.

Instead of action to tackle the roots of poverty we will get a sick marketing ploy, a "World Day for Children" sponsored by the United Nations and McDonald's.

The multinational will donate a (small) amount of money to charity for each burger a child eats that day.

"This is Blairism gone

mad," the *Guardian* quoted one exasperated summit insider as saying.

The media focused on the rows between the US and other governments, including Britain, at the summit.

The US was reluctant to even make noises about targets and aims for tackling poverty and environmental destruction.

But the US was more than happy with the thrust of the summit.

"We are very excited about partnerships," said US summit delegation leader Paola Dobriansky.

Tony Blair, for once, did attack the US over climate change.

That had less to do with ending global warming than with Blair wanting to show domestic opinion in Britain that he was not simply a poodle to George Bush.

Deals

Blair hopes that will make it easier for him to back Bush's war plan on Iraq.

World leaders had one more nasty twist before they left Johannesburg.

The World Trade Organisation will be given an effective veto on all deals and agreements aimed at tackling environmental problems and poverty.

An explicit reference to all agreements being subject to "WTO consistency" was dropped from the draft final agreement.

But no one doubts that this is the thrust of the references to "supportiveness of trade" being a central principle.

This is aimed at ensuring that nothing gets in the way of the business agenda that dominated the real deals done at the summit.

"It is a damning indictment of governments who protested that they believed in sustainable development. This is no less than a World Trade takeover of the Earth Summit," said Friends of the Earth's Charles Secrett.

Steve Sawyer, Greenpeace's key organiser over climate change, summed up the summit well: "It's worse than we could have imagined."

25,000 join mass protest

"IN A historic show of 'people's power' over 25,000 marched on Sandton, Johannesburg, on Saturday to reject the neo-liberal politics of the summit and the South African government.

Under the banner of the United Social Movements the marchers made their way from the poverty-stricken township of Alexandra to the ultra-wealthy suburb of Sandton to send a peaceful, yet militant, message that "enough is enough".

Thousands had come from across South Africa's urban and rural poor communities, and were

joined by activists from various communities and movements from around the world.

The march represented the largest and most popular rejection of the corporate and anti-poor policies of the South African government since 1994.

Spirit

It also represented a continuation and strengthening of the growing global rejection of the capitalist neo-liberal "developmental" framework that has wreaked so much devastation on the poor majority of humanity.

Even the presence

of thousands of heavily armed police and army troops did nothing to deter the spirit or content of the people's voice or message.

The march was a resounding victory for those who continue to be marginalised and treated with contempt by the rich and powerful.

The summit has been exposed as the charade that it is. The tide is turning against the barbarities of capitalist neo-liberalism."

■ **UNITED SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**, who organised last Saturday's march against the Earth Summit in Johannesburg

Manchester ANL carnival:



Take battle to Burnley

ACTIVISTS WERE determined to use the success of the carnival to strengthen the struggle against the Nazis.

"I hope we can use today to launch an anti-racist, anti-fascist movement that can challenge racism wherever we find it," Paul Moore, a Labour councillor from Burnley, told *Socialist Worker*.

"We can't allow the BNP to become normalised and legitimised."

There was widespread anger that Burnley's Labour council had stopped the carnival taking place in the town.

"This should have been in Burnley," said Noxi, a black woman who lives in that town.

"We need the positive publicity and vibe.

"Burnley council should get the message—a future event like this must be held there to stop the Nazis before next year's elections."

Campaigners were set to hand in a petition to the council on Wednesday of this week demanding that an anti-racist carnival take place there next spring.

It has been signed by all the acts at the carnival and thousands more people.

The TUC conference next week is discussing the fight against the Nazis. It must support and organise a massive anti-racist festival in Burnley.

And everywhere people should join and build the Anti Nazi League to ensure that we create the kind of movement which can crush the BNP.



"TODAY SENDS out a powerful message that the Nazis and their views will not be tolerated in this country.

The Nazis appeared because we got complacent.

There was a belief that if you ignored the BNP they would go away. In fact they got bigger. In the 1930s people ignored Hitler and he was allowed to take power.

In Europe today we have Le Pen, Haider and Fini, and the party of Pim Fortuyn broke through in Holland.

We cannot be complacent. We can all do more to stop the Nazis and challenge racist ideas."

SHAHID MALIK (above), member of the Labour Party national executive and Burnley resident, addressing the crowd

"TODAY HAS been a brilliant day. It shows that the Nazis are the minority. We, the anti-Nazis, are the majority.

We have to go to the areas where the Nazis are building.

Their ultimate aim is an all-white Britain. We saw the result of racism this week with the murder of an Iranian asylum seeker in Sunderland.

We are here today to say we can stop that—black and white, young and old.

This is the start of a mass movement to drive the Nazis back into the sewers.

They want to appear respectable, and to con people into voting for them at next May's council elections.

We need to organise. Today shows we have the power to crush the Nazis."

JULIE WATERSON, national organiser of the Anti Nazi League

"ABOUT 20 of us have come up from the NDO post office in north London.

It's all about mixing and blending, whether it's about people or about issues and the trade unions.

It's disgraceful that the leader of Burnley council, which banned the carnival from happening there, is a member of the CWU union."

TROY, north London postal worker and CWU member



**Join the Anti Nazi League—
phone 020 7924 0333 or go to
www.anl.org.uk**

black and white unite against the Nazis



DYNAMITE!

THE BIGGEST anti-racist event in the north of England for two decades struck a major blow against the Nazi British National Party at the weekend.

Some 30,000 people joined the day-long Anti Nazi League "Love Music—Hate Racism" carnival in Manchester on Sunday.

It united black and white, young and old, gay and straight, in a celebration of everything the Nazis hate.

It signalled a turning point in the battle against the BNP, which was able to con its way into three council seats in Burnley earlier this year.

Most of those at the carnival, and on the march to it, were from the north west of England, with large numbers from Oldham and Burnley, where the carnival was originally due to take place.

"It's a breath of fresh air," Janet Alder from Burnley told *Socialist Worker*. She is campaigning over the death in police custody of her brother.

"You sense the racism the BNP have whipped up in Burnley," she said. "It's not just against Asians, but against black people like me as well."

"Seeing all these people today gives you the strength to fight back."

The carnival was overwhelmingly young.

Those who had turned out to see acts such as Ms Dynamite and Doves also knew the wider meaning

**Special report by
MATTHEW COOKSON and
KEVIN OVENDEN.
Pictures by JESS HURD and
ANGELA STAPLEFORD**

of the event.

Ijaz Yousaf and Habib Khalid had travelled from Shrewsbury.

"It's great that the bands have given their time for free. But we all have to do something," they said. "We need more of this unity to defeat racism."

There were queues at Anti Nazi League stalls as people signed up to join, take away campaign material, or ask what they could do.

The acts reinforced that message from the three stages, urging people to make the day the start of a big movement to expose and drive back the BNP.

The sun shone. People relaxed, danced and enjoyed the music. They left determined to counter the BNP's poison.



"DAYS LIKE this are extremely important with the Nazis starting to become popular again.

We have to keep making sure that our voices are heard. It's a really nice vibe. The vibe out there was really positive.

It was nice to see such a mixture of different people—old and young, different cultures.

When the media tries to make the BNP's values and standards look respectable it's extremely wrong.

Racism is something that affects everyone—we have to do something about it."

MS DYNAMITE

"THIS CARNIVAL shows that we are the majority in Britain. It's a beautiful day and thousands of people have come out to show their support.

Anti-racism is common sense to people like me.

Poverty is the root of all this crap. But the leading figures in Burnley aren't breaking down anything.

Education and the eradication of poverty are the fundamental things needed to break down racism."

JIMI GOODWIN, Doves

"WE WANT to unite everyone through music. Everyone needs to be alert to what's going on—it's not good.

Today was wicked. We were at the forefront of the march giving it our all. We have to take part and encourage everyone.

There's power in numbers. We all have to stand together.

Black and white have to unite and smash the Nazis.

If something like this happens in the future Heartless Crew have to be involved."

HEARTLESS CREW

"I'M HERE to support the Anti Nazi League and the anti-racist campaign in the north west.

You hope that everyone involved today gets a sense of what anti-racism is.

It's the opposite of what the BNP stands for. We stand for unity, diversity and multiculturalism. They stand for segregation and division.

Music and musicians have a role in the fight against racism.

Imagine if the Beatles only listened to English music—what would they have produced?"

BILLY BRAGG

Unlikely critics isolate hawks

WHAT A difference a year makes. In the aftermath of 11 September last year, the world's ruling classes rallied in solidarity with the United States.

"We are all Americans," declared the Parisian daily *Le Monde*.

Contrast the situation today. As the leading figures in George W Bush's administration prepare to invade Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein, they find themselves largely isolated internationally.

Their most loyal ally, Tony Blair, is himself very isolated domestically. Blair aside, in Britain only the Tories—still objects of general derision and contempt—wholeheartedly support an attack on Iraq.

Last weekend foreign secretary Jack Straw tried to unite the European Union around a policy of calling for the return of United Nations weapons inspectors to Iraq as a prelude to military action.

But a few days earlier US vice-president Dick Cheney specifically rejected such an option.

Cheney is the leader of the Washington hawks, who include defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz.

They advocate the strategy of what has been called "pre-emptive retaliation" that was outlined by Bush himself in a speech at West Point in May.

But they face growing opposition within the ruling Republican Party.

It comes from leading figures in the administration of George Bush Sr, notably James Baker and Lawrence Eagleburger, successive Secretaries of State between 1989 and 1993, and Brent Scowcroft, who served as national security assistant.

Baker is an especially important figure. He is a clever Texan lawyer who played a leading role in Ronald Reagan's administrations during the 1980s before becoming the elder Bush's top adviser.

Baker also headed up the legal battle that got Bush Jr into the White House after the disputed 2000 presidential election.

Warn

So these critics aren't marginal liberals. The debate between them and Cheney and Co is about the best strategy for maintaining the US as the dominant capitalist power in the 21st century.

The hawks argue from a perception less of American strength than of potential weakness.

They fear long term threats to US power—notably from China, which can contend for dominance in Asia if its present rapid economic growth continues for another decade or so.

From this perspective, the US's present military pre-eminence opens a window of opportunity. The conquest of Iraq would not only remove an irritant and increase US leverage within the Middle East.

It would also warn off potential challengers like China and Russia.

But for Baker—and no doubt also the current Secretary of State, Colin Powell, another veteran of the elder Bush's administration—a unilateral US attack on Iraq would make the situation worse rather than better.

ALEX CALLINICOS looks at the problems facing George Bush's plans to attack Iraq

In the first place, even if it succeeded it would face the problem that led them, along with Bush Sr, to leave Saddam in place after his defeat in the 1991 Gulf War.

Without Saddam's brutal rule to hold it together, Iraq, a highly fragmented society, might disintegrate, leaving Iran as the strongest regional power.

Secondly, an Anglo-American war against Iraq would destabilise the West's leading allies in the Arab world.

One of them, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, said last week that it would lead to "chaos happening in the region. Not one Arab leader would be able to control the angry outburst of the masses."

Brute

Thirdly, the critics offer as their model the 1991 Gulf War, when the US led a large coalition of states, including a number of Arab regimes and Washington's main European allies, against Iraq.

So Baker and his co-thinkers don't necessarily reject the hawks' objective of achieving "regime change" in Iraq through military action.

They are critical rather of the prevailing strategy, and argue that US global power depends on coalition-building as well as brute military force.

The problem is that Cheney and his allies positively make a virtue of acting unilaterally.

Comparing Bush Jr to Winston Churchill, Rumsfeld said last week that "it's less important to have unanimity than it is to be making the right decision and doing the right thing, even though at the outset it may seem lonesome."

Bush and his advisers have painted themselves into a corner. If they back off now, this will be a humiliating blow from which the administration may never recover.

But if they press ahead, then all of what the critics predict—and maybe worse—is likely to happen.

In one sense then the hawks are right.

On the decisions that Bush and his team take in the next few weeks hangs the fate of US imperialism for many years to come.

Alex Callinicos is the author of *The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx* and a contributor to *Marxism and the New Imperialism*. Both are available from Bookmarks—phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarks.uk.com

inside the system

Who will be footing the mayor's bill?

AS WE report on page 7, Paul Foot will be standing for the Socialist Alliance for mayor of the east London borough of Hackney.

Paul's election team was anxious to discover how much the mayor would be paid.

The remarkable answer from the council was that it will be decided AFTER the result of the election is declared!

A meeting three days after the count will vote on how much to give the winner.

Executive mayors elected under the new system are paid up to £53,000 a year.

Just how much do you think the Labour-dominated council would vote through if Paul won?



THE RAC motoring company has been forced to launch an investigation after one of its vans was seen at the Nazi BNP's recent "festival" in Sawley.

The van was spotted in the car park on the second day of the festival. It was not attending a breakdown and there was no sign of the driver.

Stuff the (£25) jubilee photo

STAFF AT Buckingham Palace have been asked to pay £25 each for a framed copy of a royal photo.

The shot of 500 palace workers was taken to mark the jubilee.

Low paid palace workers on less than £200 a week are furious.

One told newspapers, "It's a bit rich. The queen could afford to give a photo to everyone."

Before the jubilee the staff were asked to pay between £5 and £20 each to buy the queen a gift.

Freedom for a few

GEORGE BUSH always claims US citizens are "freedom-loving people", but they don't have equal access to that freedom.

More black men in the US are in prison than in higher education, a new report has confirmed.

In 2000 there were 791,600 black men in US prisons and country jails, while only 603,032 were enrolled in colleges and universities.

In the last 20 years the number of

black men imprisoned in the US has risen fivefold as increasing numbers are locked up for non-violent offences.

In 1980 some 143,000 black men were locked up while 463,700 were studying.

During the same 20 years spending on prisons rose from 2.1 percent of the national budget to 6.3 percent. Meanwhile, spending on higher education fell from 8 percent to 4.3 percent.

State school is taken for Ryde

A STATE primary school has done a deal with a commercial college that would see parents charged £600 for their children's tuition in school hours.

Tutors from the privately-run Ryde College, near Watford in Hertfordshire, have agreed to prepare 20 nine and ten year olds at Lea Junior Primary School in Slough, Berkshire, for GCSEs in information technology—at a price.

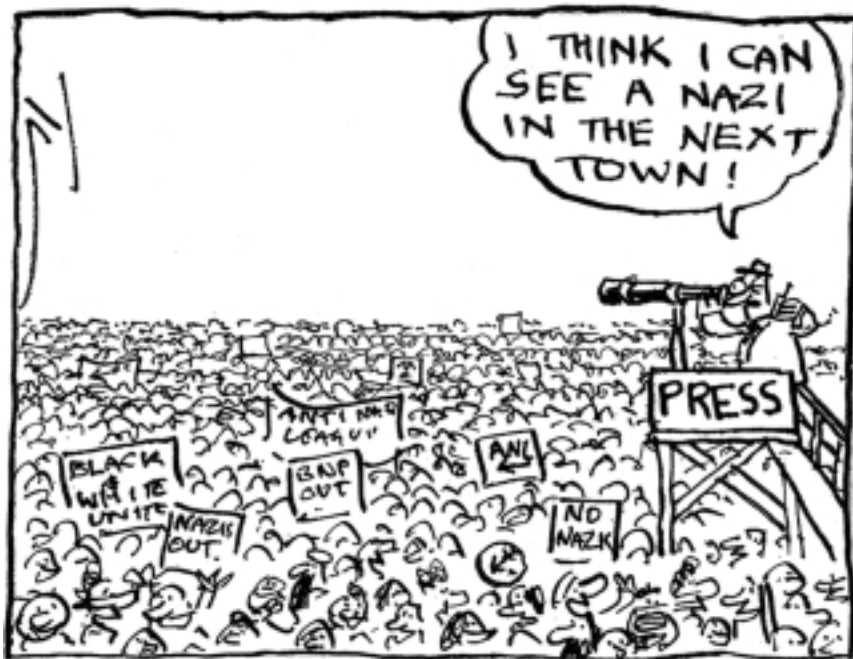
It is believed to be the first time that staff from a commercial education firm

have charged for teaching in a state school during school hours.

Slough Borough Council announced it would investigate the deal, while a teachers' union said charging the parents of state school pupils threatened the principle of free education.

Eamonn O'Kane, general secretary of the teachers' NASUWT union, said: "Surely this undermines the principle of access to education for all youngsters?"

"If such courses become more widespread, it could threaten one of the great bulwarks of the state education service—access for all."



TWO top cops facing allegations of corruption have been suspended from work for five years on their full salaries.

The police officers' suspension is costing around £1 million of public money.

The men were actually cleared of having committed any offences back in May 1999.

But incredibly they are still waiting for a disciplinary hearing.

Charged for rights abuses

SHAHID QURESHI fled from Pakistan to Australia and was banged up in a notorious refugee detention centre in Melbourne for six months.

He has now been landed with a £10,000 bill for his time inside.

This works out at £57 a night.

But Mr Qureshi was locked in a cramped, doorless dormitory with a two-hour queue for the showers.

He said, "I just don't understand it."

"They keep me in jail by force—they insult me, give me bad food to eat."

"I'm not a criminal but I have to wear handcuffs. And then when I come out of there they give me a big bill."

The only way Mr Qureshi can avoid paying the bill is to return to Pakistan where he fears persecution.



ANGIOLINA Foster has just taken over as acting chief executive of the Glasgow Housing Association.

This is the body which will run the city's housing after it was removed from council control.

She is also Communities Scotland director of regulation and inspection.

This means she will now head the body she is supposed to monitor.

THINGS THEY SAY

"THE global situation contains its own fragilities—the internal contradictions of global capitalism, and the errors and excesses it brings with it."

■JACQUES CHIRAC, right wing president of France

"THE TRUTH is that the longer that this business goes on the more damaging it becomes to US foreign policy. The president seems to be saying one thing, vice-president Dick Cheney is saying something different, and other officials something else."

■US GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

"THE bishops really annoy us. They do not know what they are talking about."

■DOWNING STREET INSIDER on anti-war clergy

"TODAY THE anti-war movement is potentially better placed than at any time since the 1930s. It could well be representing the views of the majority. Any outcome short of a swift and total victory over Saddam Hussein could prove fatal to Mr Blair's premiership."

■Pollster PETER KELLNER

"BLAIR COULD not survive overwhelming public and party opposition to British support for a US attack. If we didn't support it, it is very unlikely Bush would carry it out."

■Former right wing Labour chancellor LORD HEALEY

"THE BASIS of Virgin's franchise over the last five years has been people were paying more now in advance of prospective improvements... and slowly the improvements are being chipped away."

■ANTHONY SMITH, director of the Rail Passengers Council, on the West Coast Main Line closures

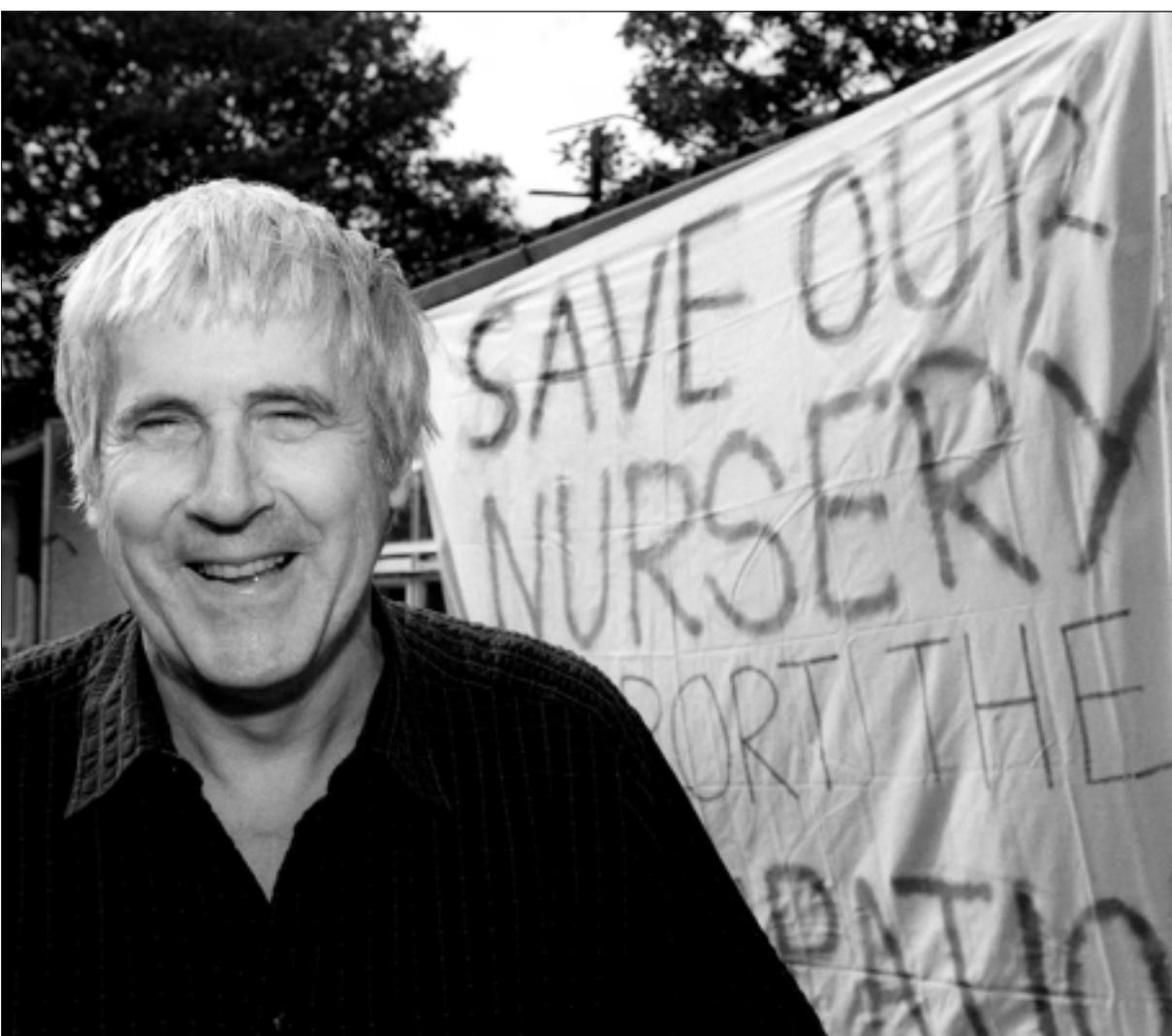
DO YOU have a story for Inside the System? Send it to Inside the System, Socialist Worker, PO Box 82, London E3 3LH.

All readers who send in a story that is printed are put into a monthly raffle for a book.

Myth of 'underclass'

Report slams policy over 'feckless' poor

FOOT FOR MAYOR



PAUL FOOT came to show solidarity with a nursery occupation in east London last week (see page 14 for full report)

SOCIALIST CAUSES A PANIC FOR BLAIR

PAUL FOOT, the Socialist Alliance candidate for the mayor of Hackney in east London, is frightening New Labour.

The *Independent* newspaper reported last week, "Such was Millbank's consternation at the prospect of Paul Foot standing for election in east London that it turned to Mo Mowlam to become the Labour candidate."

"But the former secretary of state for Northern Ireland had little hesitation in declining."

Paul Foot told *Socialist Worker*, "The attempt to get Mo Mowlam involved is a massive vote of no confidence in New Labour's candidate from its own side."

"But I am not surprised that Mo Mowlam did not want to go down the same road as other candidates that the New Labour apparatus has imposed such as Frank Dobson and Alun Michael."

"New Labour do not think I am a marginal candidate—and they're right. This episode is a signal to redouble our efforts in this election."

New Labour set up executive mayors to make local government even less accountable. The legislation also makes sure that a candidate from outside the

traditional parties will be hedged around with restrictions.

Paul Foot has spent his life as a campaigning and investigative journalist. He aims to be a campaigning and investigative mayor.

Paul spoke to some of his supporters at a meeting last week and laid out the basic features of the campaign.

"Local, national and international issues will all matter in this election. For instance, the biggest political issue during the campaign is almost certain to be Bush's war on Iraq."

Disgraceful

"I shall therefore be a mayoral candidate totally opposed to the war and prepared constantly to say so."

"By the same token I shall also be the candidate relentlessly opposed to the disgraceful treatment of asylum seekers by the government."

"We will get the message across much more clearly if we set out relevant local policies to explain where we stand."

"For instance, we will show that the government is prepared to spend billions

on bombing the already shattered people of Iraq while cutting funding to schools, nurseries, home helps for the elderly, services for disabled people, and libraries in Hackney."

"The local paper recently led on the terrible mess the council has got itself into on the issue of education."

"There will soon be only one co-educational non-religious secondary comprehensive school in Hackney."

"My most urgent commitment as mayor will be to set in motion plans for the immediate construction of two new co-educational, secular and comprehensive schools in the borough."

Paul also spoke about issues such as housing, privatisation, racism and the legalisation of cannabis. His campaign is already winning wide support from people who are fed up with New Labour nationally and locally.

The election will be carried out by postal ballot with the first voting papers delivered to houses on 7 October. Voting ends on 17 October.

■ To get involved in Paul Foot's campaign phone 020 8525 6616 or go to www.hackneysa.net

AN IMPORTANT new study has blown a hole through the central ideas behind New Labour's welfare "reform".

The study is called *Poverty and the Welfare State: Dispelling the Myths* by social policy expert Paul Spicker.

It is published by the "think-tank" Catalyst, whose members include Labour's former deputy leader Roy Hattersley.

The right wing press, the Tories and New Labour constantly peddle the idea that poverty is down to "irresponsible" behaviour, such as drug taking, teenage pregnancy or crime.

But this study slams that, saying, "Poverty is not a problem of the behaviour of poor people."

The report attacks the idea that the poor have become dependent on welfare "handouts".

And it confirms what *Socialist Worker* has long argued—that the idea of an "underclass" of the permanently "socially excluded" is a myth.

The report shows that people move in and out of poverty as their jobs, marital and other circumstances change.

During the 1990s some 60 percent of the population spent at least one year in the bottom 30 percent of income distribution.

"Poverty is generally an experience for part of people's lives, not for all of it," says the report.

The report reveals that a much greater proportion of the population is prone to poverty than is often assumed by politicians.

It quotes figures from the Rowntree Foundation that show some 14.5 million people, over one quarter of the population, are living in poverty.

The poorest are young, single people who are not working, families with young children, female single parents, people with disabilities, and older pensioners.

The report adds, "Although these groups are more vulnerable, it is not clear that any group is immune to poverty."

"Most of the population is likely to have been on a low income for at least some time in the last few years."



MANY PEOPLE are hit by poverty

The report is scathing about the New Labour politicians who say there is an "underclass, shut out from society".

"Poverty means that people who are poor lack the diets, amenities, opportunities and scope for participation in society that others have."

"It is striking that so many people seem to go through poverty, particularly during childhood, without becoming alienated from society," says the report.

The report accuses New Labour of repeating the myths perpetrated by right wingers like the former Tory minister Keith Joseph, who talked about a "cycle of deprivation" of the "feckless poor".

False

David Blunkett, the home secretary, said, "You can give the poor some money for a period of time but they still remain poor."

"This is false," states the report.

"People do not remain poor indefinitely. The point of giving them money is to tide them over."

Since the 1970s, under both Tory and Labour governments, the social security system has become more reliant on means tested benefits and stigmatising people for "dependency, fraud and unwillingness to work".

The government's welfare reform green paper in 1998 argued, for example, that the welfare system "chains people to passive

dependency".

The problem with benefits is not that they are too high but that they are hard to claim and set at very low levels.

"They are enough to cover the costs of physical existence, but not enough for a basic standard of living as it is normally understood, let alone for income replacement."

The report argues that "it's not benefits, it's the economy" which determines whether people find work or not:

"The argument that welfare encourages dependency has been around for over 200 years, and has repeatedly been disproved by changes in the economy."

The report also shows that welfare costs are not spiralling out of control and that benefit fraud is totally exaggerated.

It concludes that rather than stigmatise the poor through means tested benefits and punitive sanctions, the government should provide universal benefits:

"Poverty is not the moral, cultural or social problem of a permanently excluded underclass, but an economic risk that affects everyone."

"The purpose of the welfare state should not be to target programmes more carefully on 'the poor', but to ensure there is a general framework of resources, services and opportunities which are adequate for people's needs, and can be used by everyone."

■ You can read the report at www.catalyst-trust.co.uk

social forum debates

Does movement need parties?

MANY PEOPLE are deeply hostile to mainstream political parties, and rightly so.

They are utterly fed up with political leaders who lie and spin, who ignore their views and shamelessly promote the interests of big business.

Others are suspicious of all political organisations. They fear that parties will seek to impose their own agenda on any campaign and use it for their own ends.

Many anti-capitalist activists have reacted against failures and betrayals of official politics by organising in new ways, with more democracy and no leaders.

The Italian writer Antonio Negri, whose ideas hold a lot of influence within the anti-capitalist movement, has written an article advocating a "movement of the movements" to establish new forms of political expression.

The diversity of views and ways of expressing them are a huge strength within the movement.

It would be madness to impose conditions on activists and groups in the movement before agreeing to work with them. This would have led to a much weaker anti-war movement in Britain, for example.

But within any movement a whole range of different and opposing views are thrown up. People take sides in these arguments.

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci made the point that even when people reject the label of parties they coalesce around arguments.

After the murder of Carlo Giuliani during the anti-capitalist protests in Genoa last year arguments broke out.

Some groups argued that protesters should not march the next day, others that we should limit the protests and others that the demonstration needed to be the biggest show of strength and outrage possible.

Some 300,000 people marched. But the inspiration of that day depended on activists winning the argument.

Politics surface in every

JUDY COX looks at another of the arguments around the European Social Forum

campaign—in debates about what tactics should be adopted, whether to appeal to people in authority or to other activists, and so on.

To take the movement forward in these political debates takes organisation and, crucially, socialist parties.

Organisation makes it possible to generalise the most successful initiatives across the whole movement and avoid strategies that do not work.

It is quite right to reject the whole idea of "politics" as something a minority of leaders hand down to a passive membership.

Blind

But to be effective, any movement has to be able to discuss issues, clarify ideas, make decisions and then act.

Ideas are just as important as activity in shaping every struggle.

Some take the movement forward. Others confuse people and lead down blind allies.

So, for example, at the European Social Forum there will be people with very pro-establishment views as well as committed anti-capitalists and socialists.

Some groups, including some on the left of the movement, tried to stop political parties formally organising in the European Social Forum.

They would have prevented the far left political groups from organising but it would not have stopped parties like the Democratic Left, Italy's Labour Party, from playing a key role.

Professional politicians may have experience and confidence and appeal to some "common-sense" ideas.

But they want to lead people back to the passivity

and compromise of mainstream politics.

To challenge this depends on building an active movement where people can learn from their own experiences.

It also requires a theoretical response. Mistakes made at the level of ideas can have just as bad an effect on the movement as mistaken tactics.

For example, where anti-war movements accepted the idea that Islamic fundamentalism was as big a threat as US imperialism, the mobilisations were smaller than elsewhere.

Socialist organisation is shaped by the society we live in. It cannot be an attempt to live today as we might in a socialist society of tomorrow.

We cannot simply disassociate ourselves from the society we live in—we have to change that society.

To do that we need to organise in a certain way. We need to be centralised because the bosses, their police and army are centralised as we saw on the streets of Genoa.

A socialist organisation is not the movement. It is part of the movement, one that is inspired by the activity of thousands of other activists and the great protests in Seattle, Seville and Johannesburg.

And it wants to take the movement forward.

The key thing for socialists like Karl Marx, and later Lenin, was that socialist organisations learn from those who are fighting back just as much as they teach them.

They based their organisations on the self activity of the majority of ordinary working class people in society.

And they showed how creative ways of fighting and tight organisation complement each other.

The birth of social movements represents a huge opening up of the possibility of challenging capitalism.

But the bigger and more effective a socialist party is, the more chance we have of tipping the balance decisively.

That is what the Socialist Workers Party is trying to do today.

ONE YEAR SINCE 11 SEPTEMBER

George Bush and Tony Blair promised to bring peace, prosperity and freedom to Afghanistan. Instead they delivered...

HELL ON EARTH

NO ONE can forget the horror of the news pictures as the hijacked planes hit the twin towers a year ago, and the awful consequences for those trapped inside.

But George Bush and the US government, backed enthusiastically by Tony Blair, cynically used that tragedy to unleash even greater horror.

US president Bush claimed he would "rally the world against international terrorism".

Blair argued that he would fight to save "the starving, the wretched, the dispossessed, the ignorant, those living in want and squalor".

They targeted Afghanistan, claiming its rulers harboured those responsible for the attack on the US.

The Afghan Taliban regime, Bush and Blair argued, was "evil". They would liberate the country, and its women, bringing peace, prosperity and stability.

The reality has been different. The US took its revenge by ruthlessly bombing some of the poorest people in the world, people who had absolutely nothing to do with the attacks on 11 September.

The war was not about winning liberation for Afghanistan. It was an assertion of US imperial power.

The US and Britain turned Afghanistan into a hell hole, bringing death, destruction and chaos to a country which had already suffered from

two decades of war.

They dropped "daisy cutters" and cluster bombs which maimed and burned people, and planted thousands of unexploded landmines that will kill and injure people for years to come.

They blasted villagers, patients in hospitals and even wedding parties with 1,000-pound bombs from Vietnam-era B-52 bombers.

We may never know exactly just how many Afghan people were killed during the onslaught.

But even the most conservative estimate of the casualties shows that US and British bombing murdered more people than in the 11 September attacks.

Starvation

US professor Marc Herold, who has made a meticulous calculation of the death toll, verifies that between 3,100 and 3,600 civilians have been killed by direct hits from US bombing.

That figure does not include those who have died later from terrible injuries and the thousands more who have died through starvation and disease.

At the beginning of this year the US and Britain proclaimed that they had achieved a victory in Afghanistan.

But they continued to bomb the country—including slaughtering over 50 people at a wedding party in July.

US and British forces still occupy the country. A government has been imposed which has scant authority over feuding warlords vying for power in many parts of the country.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been dispossessed, and millions once again face the threat of famine.

Amnesty International comments, "Afghanistan is far from stable—fighting continues, crime and banditry are rife, women and ethnic groups have been targeted for abuse, and there are thousands of unexploded landmines."

The war also created massive destabilisation across the region.

It has fuelled the conflict between the two regional nuclear powers India and Pakistan, which have gone to the brink of war several times over Kashmir.

Now Bush and his gang want to inflict a bigger military assault on Iraq.

If they do it will mean death and destruction, chaos and instability even worse than the hell they have inflicted on Afghanistan.

Massacres and war crimes

IN THE north of Afghanistan the US gave the green light for its Northern Alliance allies, led by warlord General Dostum, to unleash slaughter during the war.

Last week's issue of US magazine *Newsweek* is headlined "The War Crimes Of Afghanistan".

It provides yet more evidence that last November the Northern Alliance massacred Taliban prisoners.

It documents how Alliance forces crammed 1,000 Taliban

fighters into sealed containers and condemned them to a slow death through suffocation.

The bodies of these prisoners were dumped in a mass grave near the Sheberghan prison.

The Physicians for Human Rights organisation and the United Nations have now both confirmed that these mass graves hold recent human remains.

US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld had stated just before the killings that he

wanted Taliban forces taken prisoner or "killed" so they could not "make their mischief elsewhere".

Newsweek says, "The benefit in fighting a proxy-style war in Afghanistan was victory on the cheap—cheap, at any rate, in American blood."

"The cost, *Newsweek's* investigation has established, is that American forces were working intimately with 'allies' who committed what could well qualify as war crimes."

The spectre of famine returns

THE US and Britain promised they would help rebuild Afghanistan.

It was a cruel lie. Much of the aid that was promised has failed to reach the country.

According to the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority just 5 percent of the \$5 billion pledged by Western nations has reached people in

Afghanistan.

The World Food Programme has received only 57 percent of the food it requested to prevent starvation and malnutrition.

Money for road building, irrigation and power projects will not reach Afghanistan before 2003.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced

from their homes.

Many regions are now experiencing famine.

Wivina Belmonte, of Unicef, the United Nations children's agency, said in July, "In any given year in the past decade some 250,000 children under five have died."

"The current rate of severe malnutrition is now six times higher."

Reality about refugees

THE BRITISH government now considers Afghanistan safe enough to send refugees back to.

In a powerful series in the *Independent* journalist Robert Fisk gives a different picture: "In Afghanistan it is possible to go from hell to hell. The first circle of hell is the Waiting Area, the faeces-encrusted dustbowl in which 60,000 Afghans rot along their frontier with Pakistan."

"There are laughing children with terrible facial sores, old women of 30."

"They are a leftover of the last Afghan war, the one we are supposed to believe is over."

"Things might be different if the warlord battles ended in the north, if the Americans allowed the international peacekeeping forces to move out of Kabul and collect the weapons in the north and damp down ethnic fires."

"But Afghanistan is becoming more lawless by the week."

There have been frequent

reports of rapes by the US's allies, the Northern Alliance.

The majority of women still wear the burqa, the all-encompassing veil.

Afghanistan's minister for women, Sima Samar, was forced out of the government.

She was accused of breaking sharia law and also labelled as an "Afghan Salman Rushdie".

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by HAZEL CROFT

RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

Sweet land of liberty?

"DEMOCRACIES, RATHER than dictatorships, are taking the lead in curbing civil liberties."

That is the conclusion of a human rights report recently published by Amnesty International.

It highlights the US and Britain's attacks on civil rights in the wake of 11 September.

Bush and Blair's new laws have meant thousands of innocent people have been arrested or locked up.

Most people were shocked by the images earlier this year of the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

About 600 people are currently imprisoned at the base only on suspicion of having a connection to Al Qaida or the Taliban.

Doctors admit at least 30 of the Guantanamo Bay prisoners have attempted suicide.

They have no right to a jury trial. They will be tried by five military officers, who can authorise the death sentence.

Inside the US the Patriot Act, rammed through in October, allows indefinite detention of people who are not US citizens if Bush's attorney general John Ashcroft says they are terrorists.

Verbal

The US government can also indefinitely hold any US citizens it regards as "enemy combatants".

More than 1,200 people, mostly from Middle Eastern and Muslim countries, have been arrested since 11 September.

Not one has been convicted of any terrorist offences.

Amnesty International reports that many of these people have suffered physical and verbal abuse and that they were held in prolonged solitary confinement.

The majority of these people have since been deported from the US after secret hearings.

Some in the US establishment have condemned Bush's attacks on civil rights.

A federal appeal court in Cincinnati ruled last week that the secret deportation hearings were "profoundly undemocratic" and unlawful.

The American Bar Association, which represents over half the judges and lawyers in the US, has denounced the secret detention of people.

Arab-American groups denounced Bush for violating their civil rights since 11 September at a public meeting in Detroit in July.

Witnesses referred to behind closed doors immigration hearings, secret detentions, racial profiling and coerced interviews with tens of thousands of Arab men.

But the man Bush appointed to the US civil rights commission said they should stop complaining as another attack linked to Arabs or Muslims would result in far harsher measures, adding, "You can forget about

"Tony Blair has copied many of George Bush's attacks on civil liberties"

civil rights."

US immigration officials and the FBI conducted sweeps in July in shopping centres throughout the country targeting Pakistanis working in jewellery kiosks. They claimed they wanted to find people who were sending money to Pakistan "to fund terror operations".

One of the victims of the sweep was Tariq Hussain. He said the officials searched his apartment and found his tourist photos of Times Square. "Are you planning to attack there or something," he was asked.

Tony Blair has copied many of Bush's attacks on civil liberties.

The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act came into force in February this year.

It allows for even more harsh measures than New Labour's Terrorism Act 2000.

It can detain foreign nationals indefinitely without charge or trial.

Up to May this year 155 people had been arrested, and some were detained, according to the latest figures available from the civil rights group Statewatch.

Some 98 people were released without any charge against them.

Nine are still being held in indefinite detention despite a ruling in July that the government had acted unlawfully.

Chef

The first person to go on trial was acquitted last month at the High Court.

Suleyman Zainulabidin, a London chef, was arrested in October. He was accused of "inviting another to receive instruction or training in making or using firearms or explosives".

The jury agreed Zainulabidin's website offered nothing more than a martial arts course for which "sometimes no one would turn up at all".

Amnesty International concludes the US and British attacks on civil rights have wider implications.

"The fires of racism were refuelled as governments restricted the rights of foreigners, particularly asylum seekers, who have been increasingly portrayed as terrorists."

"People were attacked not for what they did but who they were."

Picture: PA Photos/EPA

Warlords are still rampant

FAR FROM bringing democracy to Afghanistan, the war unleashed a brutal scramble for power between rival warlords.

The bombing got rid of the Taliban. But repression, brutality and bribery remain intact, making life every bit as bad as under the Taliban for most people.

The US restored to power the notorious warlords Gul Agha Shirzai in Kandahar, Ismail Khan in Herat and General Rashid

Dostum in the north. Two government ministers were assassinated in the space of seven months.

In February this year tourism minister Abdul Rahman was pulled from a plane and beaten to death by security personnel loyal to the rival Northern Alliance.

In July Afghan vice-president Haji Abdul Qadir was assassinated outside his office.

The government of

Hamid Karzai has little control over the scramble for power.

According to Ahmed Rashid, an expert on Afghanistan, "The warlords and tens of thousands of followers who were armed by the Americans to run down the Taliban have become a powerful destabilising factor."

"Unwilling to disarm or accept the writ of the central government, they are even defying the US."

by HELEN SHOOTER

The other 11 September—Chile 1973

THERE IS another 11 September, but there will be few tributes in the media to its victims.

As the Chilean writer Ariel Dorfman says:

“11 September has been a date of mourning, for me and millions of others, ever since that day in 1973 when Chile lost its democracy in a military coup, that day when death irrevocably entered our lives and changed us forever.”

On that day the Chilean military, led by General Pinochet, overthrew the elected president, Salvador Allende.

Pinochet’s troops laid siege to the presidential palace.

Hawker Hunter jets bought from Britain bombed the palace. Allende died during the siege.

The rich and the military in Chile had long bitterly resisted all change inside the country. With the full backing of the US government they launched their bloody coup.

Pinochet became president and inflicted a reign of terror.

The military rounded up tens of thousands of people, torturing and mutilating many of the prisoners.

Detention centres sprang up across the country.

The national stadium in the country’s capital, Santiago, was turned into a mass prison where Allende sympathisers were locked up and many were killed.

Pinochet’s regime massacred up to 10,000 people.

Dead bodies were left on Santiago’s streets with their bones crushed and fingernails removed.

Peasants crossing the Nuble River in central Chile found dozens of corpses, their hands tied behind their backs, floating downstream.

Tens of thousands of people became exiles from their own homeland.

Pinochet linked with other Latin American dictatorships like the one in Argentina to continue the terror in the years after the coup.

They were united in Operation Condor—which involved a series of assassinations and torture of opponents.

Pinochet, with the help of US economists, embarked on a free market experiment, pushing privatisation which created massive job losses.

These were the people from the infamous Chicago School that includes Paul O’Neill, Bush’s current treasury secretary.

Pinochet stayed on as dictator until 1990, when protests forced him to step aside. The butcher has never been brought to justice.

The US government backed him throughout his 17 years of undemocratic rule and human rights abuses.

IN THE run-up to the 1973 coup leading figures in the US establishment had made it clear they did not want Chile’s elected leader Salvador Allende.

“I don’t see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people,” said Henry Kissinger, US national security adviser.

His comments came after Salvador Allende was elected president in September 1970.

Allende was the candidate of the left wing Popular Unity coalition. He said he was a Marxist who wanted to bring about a socialist society through parliamentary reform.

Chile was a desperately poor and unequal country.

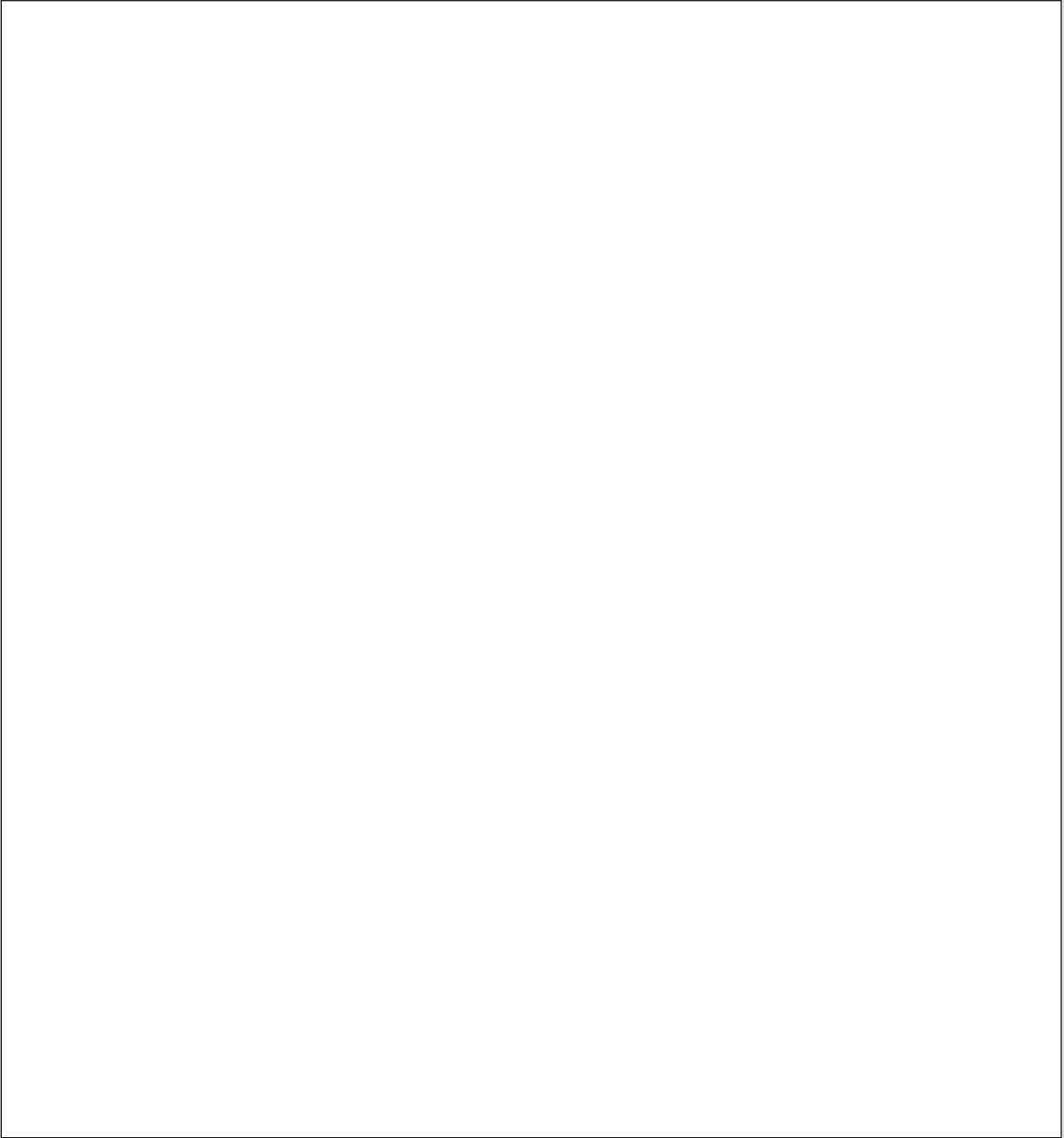
Just 3 percent of the population had over 40 percent of the country’s wealth.

Allende won the election on the back of a wave of land occupations, strikes and student protests.

He pledged to nationalise Chile’s copper mines, carry out land redistribution and raise the living standards of the majority of Chileans.

Kissinger and US president Nixon were worried that Allende’s victory would inspire other Latin American countries to rebel against the US’s dominance in the region.

The US was continuing its bloody war against “communist influence” in



PINOCHET TURNED Chile’s national stadium into a mass prison

Murder backed by US

Vietnam and Cambodia to enforce US global power.

Chile was a key country for the US—over 100 US multinationals had investments there worth over \$1 billion.

ALLENDE HAD signed an agreement with the right just before the election. It was called the Statute of Guarantees which promised not to interfere with the media, education, the police or the armed forces.

But this was not enough for his enemies. They began to mobilise their forces against this “dangerous” new president.

The US wanted to create chaos, producing the conditions for a military coup. Nixon and Kissinger held crisis meetings within days of Allende’s victory.

“Not concerned risks involved. No involvement of embassy. \$10 million available, more if necessary. Full time job—best men we have. Make the economy scream,” said the CIA intelligence organisation director’s notes of the first meeting.

General Rene Schneider, the head of the Chilean army, was opposed to military intervention.

Kissinger organised contacts with extreme right wing officers, giving them large amounts of money, machine guns and teargas grenades to kidnap Schneider.

The group sent a cable to the CIA in

Chile, which was organising with those officers, on 16 October 1970.

“It is a firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup,” it said.

“It is imperative that these actions be implemented clandestinely and securely so the United States’ government hand be well hidden.”

The right wing gang murdered Schneider on 22 October.

Although the murder did not lead directly to a coup, “the seeds that were laid in 1970 had their impact in 1973,” said Thomas Karamessines, the CIA deputy director for the plans.

The US squeezed the Chilean economy.

US banks cut aid and refused further

credit. This hit the economy hard.

It poured money into the right wing parties and anti-Allende campaigns.

Chile’s rich moved into action. Right wing parties organised a demonstration of 5,000 middle and upper class housewives through Santiago in December 1971.

They crashed pots and pans together in protest at food shortages.

In reality it was the poor who were suffering from lack of food while the rich had hoarded supplies.

Some 150,000 Santiago shopkeepers took action in August 1972. Chilean truck owners launched a national wave of sabotage in October, causing four weeks of chaos.

Bankers, lawyers and other professional workers joined the sabotage in large numbers.

DESPITE THIS Allende introduced reforms in a bid to improve the lives of Chile’s poor.

His government increased the minimum wage by 35 percent, nationalised 3.5 million acres of land, reduced unemployment from 8.3 percent to 3.9 percent and the child mortality rate dropped by 11 percent.

This made him popular among the working class.

Workers had defended Allende by seizing the trucks that the rich refused to move.

Workers broke open the supermarkets, and threw out the owners who tried to stop the factories from producing vital goods.

Workers’ committees, known as “cordones”, sprang up across Chile to distribute goods to the people.

Allende’s Popular Unity coalition won 49.7 percent of the municipal elections vote of April 1971. Again in 1973 it won 43.4 percent of the vote in national elections.

The US and the rich in Chile realised they could not get rid of Allende through elections.

The US suspended economic aid, and increased military aid.

The military repressed the workers’ movement. The right wing media began to speak of left wing plots.

When the transport owners again carried out sabotage action in August 1973, the US gave \$5 million to support them.

Some 800,000 people marched through Santiago in support of Allende on 4 September.

Tragically, he didn’t mobilise the power of his grassroots support. When sympathisers told him of plans for another coup he ignored them.

He tried to make deals with the right and even brought the leaders of the armed forces, including General Pinochet, into his cabinet.

Pinochet overthrew Allende and his government on 11 September, with the US establishment applauding every step of the way.

In 1976 Kissinger said to Pinochet, “We welcomed the overthrow of the communist-inclined government.”

The events in Chile show the US does not care about democracy, and the brutal measures it will take to maintain its interests around the globe.

More on Chile

***Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Chile* by Mike Gonzalez (£1.50) and *House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende (£7.99) are both available from Bookmarks—phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarks.uk.com**

Also *Missing* is a good film, starring Jack Lemmon as a man whose son is caught up in the coup.

by **MATTHEW COOKSON**

in my
view

True believers question faith

THE ISRAELI novelist David Grossman has described the “depth of internal poison that our huge use of violence causes us”.

That poison is now sapping the confidence of Jewish communities outside Israel, resulting in mainstream British Jewish leaders speaking out with unprecedented vigour.

Gerald Kaufman, Labour’s most senior Jewish MP, will explain on BBC2 this Saturday evening at 7pm why his love affair with Israel is over.

Angry commentators in the *Jewish Chronicle* have already attacked him for making this broadcast at the start of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year.

Two weeks ago the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, told the *Guardian* that “events in Israel on a daily basis” made him feel “very uncomfortable as a Jew”.

The Chief Rabbi says he might even meet Sheikh Abu Hamza, the north London Muslim cleric who admires Bin Laden, as part of the urgent need for inter-faith dialogue.

Kaufman’s political discussions are sometimes naïve and inconsistent.

Certainly his enthusiasm for former Israeli Labour leader Ehud Barak sits uneasily with the sense of personal nausea he feels for the rest of the modern Zionist state.

As he says, “The Jewish people, whose gifts to civilised discourse include Einstein and Epstein, are now symbolised around the world by the blustering bully Ariel Sharon.”

The brutal architecture he sees everywhere also symbolises the brutality of the Israeli state. And he contrasts these grotesque buildings with probably “the most beautiful building in Israel, the old mosque in Haifa”.

‘Defensible space’

His loathing for the religious Jewish bigots is palpable.

If this is now Zionism then he’s had enough of it. The dream of a land where socialist kibbutz communes make the desert bloom is dead. This dream has been in his heart and soul since he was a child in Leeds before the war.

By suggesting an unhinging of Jewish humanitarian values from the Israeli state, the Chief Rabbi also raises fundamental questions about the evolution of Zionism.

This has left Sharon supporters in the UK incandescent, and they are demanding his scalp.

That’s why, says the *Guardian*’s Jonathan Freedland, the left must now close ranks with him. This is too restricting. We need to welcome the Chief Rabbi’s intervention and, at the same time, widen the argument he has sparked.

For example, he’s hovering as to whether anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. For him, it is if it becomes an attack on the collective right of the Jewish people to what he calls “defensible space”.

What does he mean by this? In the 1930s socialists helped Jews in London’s East End successfully defend their space against Mosley’s fascists. Jewish defensible space isn’t necessarily in Palestine.

Presumably the Chief Rabbi meant defensible space in an Israel behind 1967 borders having evacuated the West Bank and Gaza.

But this space was seized by military force in 1948, resulting in the ethnic cleansing of nearly one million Palestinian refugees.

We need to hear from the Chief Rabbi about their right to return.

In Kaufman’s film, the Arabs who remained, and who live in Israel today, speak warmly of their friendships with Jews but feel oppressed by their Israeli citizenship.

The real test now is to help fashion a 21st century concept of citizenship, which eliminates the anti-Arab racism built into the original Zionist model, and replaces it with equal rights for all the peoples in Palestine.

by JOHN ROSE

exhibition

Colour, contrast and our world

by YURI PRASAD

“EARTH FROM the Air” is an amazing outdoor exhibition of giant photographs that contrast the beauty of the world we live in to the terrible suffering all around us.

All the photographs are taken from the sky looking down. They reveal an amazing array of colour, and layer upon layer of intricate patterns.

You may need to pinch yourself to be reminded that you are looking at something real, rather than a computer-generated graphic.

Amid the beauty of pictures in the style of *National Geographic* are images of a different kind.

Waste

There is a picture of a queue for a water well. The scorched red earth of Africa is contrasted with the almost luminous blues and greens in the clothes of the women who are waiting.

A graveyard of hundreds of old B-52 bombers, laid out tip to toe, form a weird geometric pattern. But seeing them here—rusting away—you can’t help but ponder the incredible waste that the arms industry has created.

In between the pictures are placards with facts and figures that tell you of the vast and growing inequality that plagues humanity.

Despite these horrors, you will come away from this exhibition thinking about what beauty there still is in the world.

■“*Earth from the Air—A Photographic Portrait of Our Planet*” by Yann Arthus-Bertrand is outside the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London (nearest South Kensington) until 15 September and then touring Britain.

OVERLOOKING RIO de Janeiro—a picture by Yann Arthus-Bertrand in the exhibition

CD

There’s nowt so tuneful as folk

by ALISTAIR HULETT

THE BAND Blue Murder brings together seven of the most influential voices in English folk music.

Martin Carthy and Norma Waterson are joined by their daughter Eliza, Norma’s brother Mike, and the trio Coope, Boyes and Simpson.

The end result is a celebration of the human spirit.

None of the songs on this CD are overtly political. There’s a fair slab of religion, gospel-style, thrown in.

The title track, “No One Stands Alone” stands firmly in the country gospel tradition of the US Deep South.

To hear it sung in broad

northern English accents is a reminder of the immense cultural diversity that produced rock & roll.

Blue Murder’s repertoire is a snapshot of Yorkshire and Derbyshire’s contribution to the roots of 20th century popular culture.

The highlights on this album are the biting songs of Mike Waterson. “Three Day Billionaire”, with its intention on payday to “show the other buggers who’s a man”, is a funny and com-

passionate portrait of male working class life.

His hilarious “Mole in a Hole” contains the verse:

*I had a friend who found a friend in Jesus
He used to read the Good Book every day
My friend got so friendly with friend Jesus
Friend Jesus took my only friend away.*

If passionately sung anthems of working class life in England sound like something you fancy hearing, check out Blue Murder’s *No One Stands Alone* on Topic Records (TSCD537).

film

Two worth viewing

TWO MEN, a nurse and a travel journalist, and their relationships with two women, a dancer and a bullfighter, who are both in a coma.

Talk To Her, a new film by Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, uses that unlikely storyline to reveal a lot about sexuality in Spain today.

The characters are sensitively drawn, especially male nurse Benigno and his obsessive and one-sided relationship with the dancer.

The film has courted controversy because it explores Benigno’s rape of the woman. But this is not crass sensationalism. Almodovar uses it to raise questions about loneliness and alienation.

Talk To Her is in lots of ways an uplifting and thought-provoking drama. HAZEL CROFT

□LANTANA IS set in Australia and revolves around three sets of relationships.

The central character is a bored middle aged cop who can’t relate to his wife or the woman he has an affair with. A therapist is desperate to regain some connection with her husband. The Daniels are a working class family trying to get by.

These lives crash together when a dead body is discovered.

The film cleverly exposes how lies have poisoned the relationships.

It hasn’t got a “happy families” ending. A very good film is all the better for that. HELEN SHOOTER



INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism.

In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism. We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gays.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

Marxist forums

The Socialist Workers Party is hosting Marxist forums across England and Wales. Why not come along and join in the discussion?



ANGEL
Is the US all-powerful?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Slug & Lettuce, Upper St.

BARNLEY
The war on terror one year on
Wed 11 Sep, 7.30pm, Barnsley Library.

BAYSWATER
Labour Party policy and the rise of Islamophobia
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Coffee Island, 30 Westbourne Grove (opp Saqi Books). *With Hassan Mahamdallie.*

BIRKENHEAD
11 September: the war on terror one year on
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Oxtan Green Community Centre, Christchurch Rd. *With Paul Sillett.*

BIRMINGHAM KINGSHEATH
After the Earth Summit: how can we save the planet?
Wed 11 Sep, 7.30pm, Dance Workshop, 132 Alcester Rd, Moseley.

BLOOMSBURY
The war on terror one year on
Wed 11 Sep, 7pm, Room 3, Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St.

BRADFORD
The new left: how should we organise?
Sat 7 Sep, 2.30pm, Love Apple Cafe, Great Horton Rd.

BRENT
Woomera breakout: video showing
Sun 8 Sep, 3.30pm, Willesden Library Centre, 95 Willesden High Rd.

BRIGHTON
Is the US all-powerful?
Sun 8 Sep, 7pm, Phoenix Community Centre, Phoenix Place. *With Michael Bradley.*

BRISTOL GLOUCESTER ROAD
What would socialism look like?
Sun 8 Sep, 3pm, Casa Sudacca, Zetland Rd.

BRISTOL TOTTERDOWN
The Middle East, oil and war
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Sunflower Cafe, YMCA, Wells Rd.

BURNLEY
Woomera breakout: video showing
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Shalamar, Church St. *With a speaker from Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers.*

CALEDONIAN ROAD
Can we regenerate the cities?
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Shillibeers Restaurant, North Rd.

CAMBRIDGE
Iraq, war and imperialism
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Jaffe Net Cafe, Miller Rd.

CAMDEN
Imperialism: the armed wing of globalisation?
Mon 30 Sep, 7.30pm, Cafe Marx, Castlehaven Community Centre, Hawley Rd.

CANTERBURY
The Middle East, oil and war
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, Canterbury Wholefoods, Jewry Lane.

CARDIFF
How can we change the world?
Tue 10 Sep, 7.30pm, Atlantic Coffee House, City Rd.

CHESTERFIELD
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Assembly Rooms, Market Hall. *With Judith Orr.*

COLCHESTER
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Mon 16 Sep, 8pm, RAD, Southway. *With Jim Jepps.*

CRAWLEY
The crisis of European social democracy
Wed 11 Sep, 7.30pm, Three Bridges Community Centre, Gales Place. *With Jake Hoban.*

CREWE
Is revolution possible?
Wed 11 Sep, 7pm, Kings Arms, Earle St.

DUDLEY
Iraq, war and imperialism
Thu 5 Sep, 8pm, Claughton Community Centre, Blowers Green.

EALING
Revolution: is it possible?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Woodville Rd. *With Alan Kenny.*

ENFIELD
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Edmonton Community Centre, Plevna St.

FINSBURY PARK
The revolutionary life of Che Guevara
Tue 1 Oct, 7.30pm, Cafe Moda, Fonthill Rd (London Fashion Centre). *With Judith Orr.*

HACKNEY ALBION ROAD
Islam and Islamophobia
Sun 15 Sep, 5pm, Hawksley Court Community Hall.

HACKNEY HOMERTON
Is the US all-powerful?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Chat's Palace, Chatsworth Rd. *With Kevin Ovenden.*

HACKNEY SHOREDITCH
Imperialism: the armed wing of globalisation?
Tue 12 Sep, 8pm, Barley Mow, Curtain Rd. *With Yuri Prasad.*

HACKNEY STAMFORD HILL
The war on terror one year on
Wed 11 Sep, 7.30pm, Cyprus House, Manor Parade.

HACKNEY WICK
After the Earth Summit: how can we save the planet?
Sun 8 Sep, 4pm, Quality Cafe, 244 Morning Lane. *With Sally Campbell.*

HUDDERSFIELD
Socialism and war
Thu 12 Sep, 6pm, Coffeevolution, Wood St.

ILFORD
9-11 one year on: who's terrorising who?
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Icon Bar & Restaurant, 262 Ilford High Rd.

IPSWICH
Terrorism: is it the response of the dispossessed?
Mon 16 Sep, 8pm, Cafe Marx, CAB, Tower St.

LADBROKE GROVE
Are women any nearer to equality?
Tue 10 Sep, 7.30pm, Green Room, Paddington Arts Centre, Woodfield Rd. *With Joe Cardwell.*

LEEDS BEESTON
Revolution: is it possible?
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, South Leeds Learning Centre, Gipsy Lane (nr Cockburn High School).

LEEDS CHAPELTOWN
Women and globalisation
Thu 12 Sep, 7.30pm, West Indian Centre, Laycock Place.

LEEDS CITY CENTRE
Trotsky and the united front
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Swarthmore Centre (opp Park Lane College). *With Dick Pitt.*

LEEDS HAREHILLS
How can we save the planet?
Wed 18 Sep, 7.30pm, Pakistani Community Centre (next to mosque).

LEEDS HEADINGLEY
What are the roots of Zionism?
Tue 17 Sep, 7.30pm, All Hallows Church, Regent Terrace (off Hyde Park Rd).

LEICESTER
Che Guevara: more than a revolutionary icon?
Mon 16 Sep, 7.30pm, Mozart Cafe, London Rd.

LEYTONSTONE
9-11 one year on: who's terrorising who?
Tue 10 Sep, 7.30pm, Prospero's Cafe. *With Megan Trudell.*

LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE
11 September: the war on terror one year on
Wed 11 Sep, 7.15pm, Casa, Hope St.

LIVERPOOL TOXTETH
11 September: the war on terror one year on
Sun 8 Sep, 5pm, Somali Community Centre, Lodge Lane.

LUTON BURY PARK
Imperialism's bloody history in the Middle East
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Bury Park Community Centre.

MANCHESTER CENTRAL
Malcolm X
Sat 7 Sep, 3pm, Unitarian Chapel, Cross St. *With Ameen Hadi.*

MANCHESTER CHORLTON
How can we save the planet?
Sat 14 Sep, 3pm, Nehmat Hadah Curry House, 30 Manchester Rd.

MANCHESTER HARPURHEY
How do we fight fascism?
Tue 10 Sep, 7pm, Harpurhey Neighbourhood Centre, Carrisbrooke St. *With Jess Edwards.*

MANCHESTER RUSHOLME
Is America invincible?
Thu 5 Sep, 6.30pm, Dil Dar Cafe, 111 Wilmslow Rd. *With Geoff Brown.*

NEW CROSS
9-11 one year on: who's terrorising who?
Tue 10 Sep, 7pm, Moonbow Jake's Cafe Bar (between New Cross ➡ & New Cross Gate ➡).

NORTHAMPTON
Does the media control our ideas?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Cafe Msaada, Kettering Rd (below Picturedrome).

NOTTINGHAM HOCKLEY
The Earth Summit: what's behind the hype?
Tue 10 Sep, 7pm, Vam's Bar, Broad St (opp Broadway Cinema).

OLDHAM
Can war bring peace?
Sat 7 Sep, 2pm, Cafe Bar 360, Gallery Oldham, Greaves St.

PRESTWICH
What would socialism be like?
Sun 15 Sep, 3pm, Caribbean Retreat, Clifton Rd.

READING
Is Britain a classless society?
Sat 14 Sep, 4pm, Reading International Solidarity Centre, London St.

SCARBOROUGH
Behind the Blair-Bush axis: why Iraq?
Sun 8 Sep, 5.30pm, Crescent Arts Centre (below Art Gallery), The Crescent.

SHEFFIELD CARBROOK ENGINEERS
Labour and the unions: is the honeymoon over?
Fri 6 Sep, 11am, Carbrook Hall pub, Attercliffe Common.

SHEFFIELD CARBROOK OFFICE WORKERS
Can the stock exchanges bounce back?
Thu 5 Sep, 5.30pm, Carbrook Hall pub, Attercliffe Common. *With Dave Hayes.*

SHEPHERD'S BUSH & HAMMERSMITH
Why does Bush want to attack Iraq?
Thu 19 Sep, 7.30pm, Cazbar, 24 West 12 Shopping Centre, (opp Shepherd's Bush ➡). *With Chris Bambery.*

SOUTHAMPTON
US imperialism: is it unstoppable?
Mon 16 Sep, 7.45pm, Freedom Cafe, High St. *With Chris Bambery.*

STOCKPORT
Is racism getting worse?
Thu 5 Sep, 7pm, Stockport Central Library.

TOOTING
Noam Chomsky and the politics of resistance
Tue 17 Sep, 7.45pm, Derinton Rd Community Centre, Derinton Rd.

WALTHAMSTOW
9-11 one year on: who's terrorising who?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Cafe Rio, 85 High St. *With Helen Salmon.*

WHITSTABLE
Why does Bush want to attack Iraq?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Marx & Sparks (cnr of Warwick Rd & Albert St).

WOOLWICH
Terrorism: is it the response of the dispossessed?
Thu 5 Sep, 7.30pm, Tramshed, Woolwich New Rd. *With Megan Trudell.*

Contact socialists near you

Barnsley
☎ 07881 558 590

Birmingham
☎ 07949 028 362

Black Country
☎ 07941 834 125

Bradford
☎ 07811 403 299

Brighton
☎ 07808 368 551

Bristol
☎ 07711 718 519

Cambridge
☎ 07950 142 464

Cardiff
☎ 07788 770 741

Central London
☎ 07957 316 094

Chesterfield
☎ 07881 558 590

Coventry
☎ 07712 047 873

East Anglia
☎ 07946 269 024

East London
☎ 07753 697 743

Exeter
☎ 07939 558 115

Hackney
☎ 07813 135 922

Home Counties
☎ 07905 589 865

Kent
☎ 07789 961 744

Lancashire East
☎ 07968 952 180

Lancashire West
☎ 07931 725 633

Leeds & West Yorkshire
☎ 07757 491 497

Manchester
☎ 07946 413 763

Merseyside
☎ 07951 241 562

North London
☎ 07957 209 057

Norwich
☎ 07733 137 201

Nottingham
☎ 07985 713 961

Plymouth
☎ 07803 620 390

Portsmouth
☎ 07801 290 411

Sheffield
☎ 07905 678 506

South East London
☎ 07951 737 003

South London
☎ 07939 017 973

Southampton
☎ 07811 210 036

Swansea
☎ 07813 809 238

Thames Valley
☎ 07929 618 579

Tyneside
☎ 07866 465 452

Waltham Forest
☎ 07796 697 271

West London
☎ 07958 996 777

York
☎ 07956 237 270

For more details of events phone the SWP national office on 020 7538 5821 or e-mail enquiries@swp.org.uk

Socialist Worker supporters in Scotland are members of the Scottish Socialist Party.

For events in Scotland phone the SSP on 0141 221 7714. Phone the **Socialist Worker Platform** (part of the SSP) 07855 023 739.

Fax 020 7538 0140
E-mail letters@socialistworker.co.uk

or send to

letters

PO Box 82 London E3 3LH

Bradford demands justice

UP TO 500 young men are likely to be charged and convicted for the events of 7 July 2001 in Bradford.

Over 100 have already been sentenced for four to five years on average.

They were accused of things like throwing stones, of being "ringleaders" for using their mobile phones during the disturbances.

Some were no more than spectators.

Most of the young men have no previous history of being in trouble. Similar offences in other parts of the country have not received such harsh sentences.

The Fair Justice for All campaign is driven by the mothers, sisters and wives of the young men.

The campaign dissociates itself from all acts of violence and wanton destruction.

It reminds everyone of the need to look at the underlying causes of the events.

Campaigners are holding a weekly vigil outside Bradford magistrates' court every Friday between 10am and 12 noon.

Anyone wanting to find out more can contact us on 07811 332 470.

□ ARSHAD JAVED, Bradford

Amicus wrong on ESF

THE TREMENDOUS victory of Derek Simpson in the election for joint general secretary of Amicus has not led to an immediate change in the politics of the union.

When the national executive of the MSF section of the union were asked to support the European Social Forum, they rejected the motion.

The reasons are astounding. The executive claimed that the ESF "is sponsored by the Socialist Alliance, and supports violent demonstrations".

That the ESF is supported by a whole range of organisations, including Amnesty International, and many national trade unions, passes our union national executive by.

They won't support the forum, even though the union's annual conference pledged support to anti-globalisation initiatives, because of their slavish adherence to the New Labour agenda.

Derek Simpson cannot change the politics of the union alone at the top. We need a vibrant left in Amicus.

A good start is the open meeting called by the *Amicus Gazette* grouping on Sunday 8 September. It's at 11am in the Claremont Hotel, Blackpool Road, Preston.

□ AMICUS MEMBER, London

Left must shape 'no' campaign on Europe

IRELAND IS the only country in Europe that is to vote on the Nice treaty agreed by European Union leaders at their summit at the end of 2000.

Though people here have already rejected the treaty in a vote once, the government is coming back with it again.

The arguments about the campaign around the referendum echo those likely to take place in Britain when Tony Blair finally calls a vote on the euro single currency.

The Nice treaty is key to paving the way for the European Union to become a major military power, and for pushing through the European leaders' neo-liberal agenda.

Some anti-Nice campaigners here want to make race and immigration a key question in the referendum.

They claim that a yes vote will mean floods of immigrants coming to Ireland. Such tactics only dis-

credit the no campaign and allow the government to present itself as the progressive and anti-racist side in the debate.

In fact it is the European Union and the Irish government, who are both pushing for a yes vote, who have encouraged racism against immigrants.

This growing racist atmosphere has already led to the racist murders of two Chinese immigrants in Dublin.

The European Union has consistently pushed an anti-immigrant "Fortress Europe" policy.

Faced with all this it is vital that anti-racists and socialists here, as they are doing, build and organise a progressive "vote no" campaign.

We are highlighting that the real problem with the Nice treaty is that it creates a European military bloc and pushes an agenda of privatisation and deregulation of public services.

□ DONALD MACFHEARRAIGH, Dublin



MARCHING IN Nice in December 2000 against Europe's leaders

Picture: JESS HURD www.reportdigital.co.uk

Democracy US-style?

THIS IS an open letter describing our experience on a recent demonstration in Portland, Oregon in the US against the policies of George W Bush.

I want to thank the kind human beings who helped my children, my wife and me after we were pepper-sprayed by the Portland police.

We brought our children to a peaceful protest. We stayed in the back and we were walking on the sidewalk. Police moved up behind us and a moment or two later sprayed pepper

spray into the crowd.

As the crowd pressed towards us I yelled to a police officer to let us through because we had three small children. He looked at me, and drew out his can from his hip and sprayed directly at me.

The spray hit my right eye and our three year old, who I was holding in my right arm.

In the same motion he turned the can on my wife, who was holding our ten month old baby, and doused both of their heads.

The officers were laughing and said something to

the effect of, "That's why you shouldn't bring kids to protests."

Please help us expose this extreme, undemocratic and brutal attack on peaceful citizens.

□ DONALD JOUGHIN, Portland, Oregon, US

UN no answer

MARTIN HOWSON (Letters, 31 August) argues for reform of the United Nations.

The UN would be more effective if each country had a single vote in a world parliament, he believes.

Clearly the present set-up gives the five major powers on the Security Council a veto on any decisions taken by UN member states.

But even if this veto was removed, they would still not be able to block Bush's war drive.

Like other multinational bodies, the UN will always be dominated by the strongest power—the US.

The UN has passed numerous resolutions condemning the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, but they have remained a dead letter without US support.

When the UN has opposed US military action as in Vietnam, the US has simply ignored it.

□ TONY PHILLIPS, East London

Dudley outrage

GARY McFarlane wrote (*Socialist Worker*, 24 August) about the disgraceful way that the Caribbean carnival in Dudley was banned this year.

He was absolutely right. The organisers of the carnival are still shocked by the decision.

It followed a ridiculous claim from police that "15,000 gun-toting black people" would come and cause trouble.

The organisers were given just four days notice of the police decision to ban the event.

The police have now

apologised after criticism from Dudley Labour Party councillors and members and anti-racists.

The police action can only have been music to the ears of racists in the Dudley area.

The BNP are trying to build a base in the area and conned 500 people into voting for them in the May elections.

We should make sure that the festival goes ahead next year and fight the police whenever they try to ban such events, which cut against racism.

□ PAUL BOLTON, Dudley

postal points

■ I AGREE with Charlie Kimber's article (*Socialist Worker*, 24 August) on the euro.

The way we approach the debate on the euro is similar to our approach on public/private services.

Low wages exist in the public sector and we support those fighting against them.

At the same time we oppose privatisation as a bosses' attempt to exploit people more easily.

Similarly, while we always fight against "our" ruling class, we also oppose the European Union as an attempt by the bosses to create a single trading block where neo-liberal policies can be pushed and coordinated more easily.

□ JOHN MAUNDER, Exeter

■ THANKS TO *Socialist Worker* for giving more space to coverage of elderly care (*Socialist Worker*, 24 August) which is a neglected area.

The greed in the care industry can be charged against private business.

However, a major factor in the loss of care bed provision is the fault of the social and health services.

Capacity has been reduced to feed into the potential profit for major providers.

Care home owners are being given a licence to print money and determine their own terms and conditions.

More discussion is long overdue.

□ PATRICK COOPER-DUFFY, Southampton

■ YOUR READERS should know of a scandal involving insurance companies that seems to be going on.

I have heard that they are refusing to fully insure firms that employ people who are classified as not fully "able bodied".

This seems to include

people suffering from stress, diabetes and the like.

If true this is outrageous. A full investigation is needed.

□ GWEN HAYWOOD, Norwich

■ ALL OF Charlie Kimber's five tests for a "campaign against the European project" (*Socialist Worker*, 24 August) are things that any trade unionist or socialist should be doing right now.

We don't have to wait for governments, politicians or bosses to start their "debate" on whether to join the euro or not for us to be organising for a better Europe and a better world.

I, for one, cannot stomach lining up with the Tories and Murdoch on this issue.

If governments and bosses want to privatise and cut services and attack workers, they will do it, euro or not. The debate is between two gangs of capitalists. We have more important fights to be involved in.

□ OMAR CUBA, Brighton

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In brief

Striking mood of social workers

OVER 250 social workers in Leeds went on strike to demand higher wages on Wednesday of last week.

The workers were demanding better pay rates and faster progression up the pay scale.

The one-day strike was extremely solid, with pickets on all major offices and scores of agency workers refusing to break the strike.

The social workers are now beginning an overtime ban and refusing to take on new cases.

The strike was called in the face of management's threats to dock workers' pay if they took industrial action.

JULES HORSLER

A great show of solidarity

POSTAL WORKERS in Portsmouth returned to work last week after an unofficial strike.

The Waterlooville office near Portsmouth walked out two weeks ago in protest at management breaking national agreements over staffing.

Workers at the Portsmouth mail centre had been warned by the management, and disgracefully their own CWU union, that they must handle mail from Waterlooville.

But we refused. On Tuesday of last week management threatened to sack two workers and 600 walked out. There was a brilliant mood of solidarity.

We stayed out until Wednesday, when CWU union officials negotiated a back to work settlement over staffing, which includes the lifting of any threat of disciplinary action.

POSTAL WORKER

Die-cast workers end dispute

THE 100 strikers, members of the GMB union, at Lupton & Place die-casting factories in Burnley returned to work last week.

Workers feel they have managed to squeeze something out of a management that had given them nothing for two years.

The strike forced some concessions. Workers have won a definite 1 percent pay rise that will be backdated.

Originally bosses had tied the offer to selling some land and said it would not be backdated.

Workers also won a "service day" for every three years and a quarter of an hour off some shifts.

Although most workers voted to accept the final offer, one third of the workforce voted against.

Fury at Parsons factory closure

WORKERS AT the Siemens Parsons engineering plant in Tyneside are considering industrial action after the firm announced 400 job losses.

That means over half of the 700 workers at the steam turbine factory could be sacked, leaving just 300 at the plant, which used to employ 10,000.

Brian Cole, who has worked in the blade room at the factory for 14 years, said, "People will be angry when this sinks in."

"After years of doing everything we can to improve productivity and making a profit for the company, they suddenly do this."

Dave Harrison, regional organiser with the Amicus-AEEU union which represents all 700 workers, said, "Nothing could be ruled out", in terms of calling action.

Journalists



A SENSE of solidarity on the picket line at EMAP last week

'Being on strike has restored our morale'

FORTY JOURNALISTS at EMAP Healthcare/PSM in London last week launched the first strike in national magazines for over a decade.

The successful one-day action over pay follows a series of strikes by journalists in local and regional newspapers.

EMAP is one of Britain's top magazine publishers. Like many companies it is broken up into various divisions.

Last week's strike involved staff in a division which publishes magazines such as *Nursing Times*.

The strike was rock solid and badly hit production of two magazines, which had to drop pages. Non-union members and freelancers also supported the strike.

Some 20 strikers joined an excellent picket line, together

with national officials and supporters.

Delegations from other unions and the Westminster council strike also attended.

At a strike meeting during the morning, national officials praised the strikers and pledged the union's support for further action.

One striker said, "I went on strike because EMAP continues to undermine professional and skilled staff by underpaying many and openly boasting enormous profits for themselves."

"Friday's strike restored some morale to my otherwise increasing despondency and feeling of worthlessness within the company. It strengthened my resolve to continue the dispute."

Another striker said, "I went on strike because I believe that

people who do the same job for the same company should be paid the same rate."

"I'm fed up with seeing good people leave because they feel they're being treated unfairly."

"EMAP gave a £1 million 'golden goodbye' to our chief executive—I was absolutely incensed."

"I felt the strike was very well organised and very well supported. It strengthened my resolve to carry on to the end."

Another striker added, "The contracts that EMAP are offering journalists are gradually getting worse."

"They have reduced the starting salary of numerous posts and there are ridiculous situations where people are doing the same job for vastly

different rates of pay."

"New contracts have seen people bound to work more hours than their colleagues."

"I found it insulting to be offered a below the rate of inflation pay rise."

"Opting to strike was not an easy decision—but I think it was the only way to show that we are prepared to act collectively and that we want to be taken seriously."

Strikers were planning to meet later this week to decide on escalating the action.

EMAP JOURNALIST

■ **Please rush messages of support to tashshifrin@hotmail.com**

■ **Donations should be made payable to NUJ EMAP Healthcare and sent c/o Dave Crouch, 6 Muswell Road, London N10 2BH.**

Anti-privatisation festival

"ANOTHER WORLD is possible" was the feeling in the air last Saturday as a festival against privatisation, racism and war gathered on the grassy slopes by the sea in Whitstable, Kent.

Hundreds came to listen to music from local bands and performers.

Among the speakers were representatives from a local Unison union branch and the RMT rail union.

This was the largest political event ever seen in the town.

It was organised by dozens

of local people who came together to promote the European Social Forum in Florence this November.

Mandy, from Unison, said, "Today has been brilliant. We've all worked so hard for this event. I've only just joined the union, but I'm off to the branch meeting to get delegated for Florence. I want to go, and I want to take my guitar!"

Organisers are now planning a similar event in December to report back from the ESF.

JON FLAIG

Burston school strike rally

THE ANNUAL Burston school strike rally was held in Diss in Norfolk last Sunday.

It celebrates Britain's longest school strike, which took place in 1914.

Between 400 and 500 people attended the event. It was a bigger and younger audience than in previous years.

Mick Rix, general secretary of the Aslef rail union, made a powerful plea for maximum

turnout on 28 September for the demonstration against war on Iraq.

Doug Nicholls, general secretary of the Community and Youth Workers Union, also spoke passionately against war against Iraq.

He told *Socialist Worker*, "There is total unity here against any attack on Iraq and in support of justice for the Palestinians."

Nursery campaign

Parents proud to fight

PARENTS AND children were subjected to disgusting intimidation last week as education managers forced through a nursery closure in Hackney, east London.

Officials of the Learning Trust, which now runs education in the borough, believed that an occupation was planned at St John's nursery.

On Thursday of last week they did everything possible to stop parents getting into the facility.

From early afternoon they assembled children in the garden, posted security guards, and had contractors ready to board up the nursery as soon as the last child was handed over.

But furious parents defied the intimidation and managed to enter the nursery. The authority's response was to call in a squad of around ten police.

Parents bravely carried on with an occupation despite a threat to board up the nursery with people inside!

Over 100 people came to a festival to support the occupa-

tion. They included Paul Foot, the Socialist Alliance candidate for mayor of Hackney.

The occupation ended on Sunday afternoon after parents were made aware that harsh legal moves were being prepared against them.

The nursery has been in operation for over half a century, and was immensely popular with staff, parents and children.

St John's parents and children are sad and angry that their nursery has gone.

But they are proud of having fought and to have extracted at least some concessions.

Campaigning and persistence led to nearly all parents getting the "least worst" option for their alternative nursery.

■ **THE CAMPAIGN to save Laburnum School in Hackney held a day for supporters last Saturday. The council has begun the process of consultation over closing the school. Campaigners believe the school will be sold to property developers.**

Council workers

Bosses threaten strike with anti-union laws

TORY-CONTROLLED Westminster council has thrown down a major challenge to the Unison public sector workers' union.

It was trying to use anti-union laws, introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Tory governments but kept by New Labour, to stop our strike action against privatisation.

Over 100 workers in the London council were out on strike at the start of this week, with 50 workers in building control the latest to join the action.

Each day since the strike began several weeks ago there have been workers on strike, with different groups taking action.

The council was trying to get an injunction ruling that this form of action is illegal under the anti-union laws.

Any such move would have serious implications for anyone taking strike action.

A court hearing was due to take place on Wednesday of this week.

It is vital that national

Unison leaders respond forcefully, and with action, to any legal attacks on our right to strike.

Westminster workers are ready and willing to fight the council's plan to privatise up to 80 percent of services.

To win they need the full backing of their Unison union leaders.

That means putting the weight of the union behind the Westminster workers, with financial backing and making the case for solidarity across Unison.

And it means union leaders looking to build on the spirit shown by the strikers to escalate the action to beat this Tory council.

RAHUL PATEL, assistant branch secretary Westminster Unison (personal capacity)

■ **Send donations and requests for delegations to Westminster Unison, First Floor (South), Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1 6QP. Phone 07956 579 466.**

Council round-up

□ **LIBRARY WORKERS in the Unison union in Hackney in east London have struck solidly every Saturday for the last nine months.**

They are protesting against Hackney council's decision to stop extra payments for working on Saturdays.

The council is attempting to break the strike by opening three out of seven libraries with casual staff.

An industrial tribunal is set for November.

Events planned to raise solidarity with the strike include:

● **A public meeting on Wednesday 18 September, 7pm, Hackney Cypriot Association, 5 Balls Pond Road, London.**

● **A lobby of the council meeting on 25 September.**

● **A national rally on Saturday 5 October to mark a year since the removal of Saturday pay.**

□ **IN AN unprecedented attack on the Unison union Liverpool city council suspended a union convenor last week.**

It has also initiated proceedings against a senior shop steward, even though he was carrying out legitimate trade union activities.

The steward is being charged with leading a sit-in.

A stewards meeting was set for Tuesday of this week.

If the second suspension goes ahead, social services workers are planning to walk out to join a mass union meeting.

National Unison leaders should give their full support.

UNISON MEMBER

■ **Send messages of support to Unison, City of Liverpool Branch, 4th Floor, Produce Exchange, 8 Victoria Street, Liverpool L2 6QJ. Phone 0151 236 1944.**



Saturday 14 September

● **Protest against New Labour's new mental health bill, 12 noon, Whitehall Place, London.**

● **Conference on the political fund, 1pm, University of Northumbria, Ellison Place, Newcastle. Phone 07801 743 444. Organised by Unison United Left.**

Sunday 15 September

● **The Battle of Chile.** Screening of the brilliant three-part film about the coup in September 1973, 2pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Tickets £5.

Monday 16 September

● **Bristol peace vigil with Tony Benn, 5.30-6.30pm, opposite Hippodrome, Bristol city centre.**

Thursday 19 September

● **Globalisation, imperialism and war: the socialist response. Public meeting with Paul Foot, Mark Serwotka, Liz Davies**

and Asad Rehman, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Organised by the Socialist Alliance.

Saturday 28 October

● **Stop the War Coalition national demonstration. Assemble 1pm, Embankment, London. Supported by CND. Phone 07803 620 390 or go to www.stopwar.org.uk**

Saturday 12 October

● **Socialist Alliance conference on the euro. South Camden Community School, Charring Street, London. Phone 020 7791 3138.**

● **Education workers unite! A conference for all school workers, 12 noon-4pm, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London. Organised by Ealing NUT.**

● **Scrap Trident national demonstration, 12 noon, Plymouth Hoe. Overnight accommodation available Friday. Phone 07803 620 390. Called by CND.**

Thursday 7 November-Saturday 9 November

● **European Social Forum, Florence, Italy. Phone 020 7053 2072 or go to www.mobilise.org.uk for transport. To book your place go to www.fse-esf.org**

Health workers

Victory that can light fire against low pay

VICTORY. That's the verdict of low paid health workers in Scotland after they took nine days of unofficial strike action.

"We are over the moon with the outcome. This is a victory for all low paid workers in the NHS," said hospital porter and Unison union shop steward Bobby Reed.

The victory shows that swift, determined action from below can force even hard-nosed bosses to crumble.

Ancillary workers at the Inverclyde Royal Hospital in Greenock and the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley, both just outside Glasgow, walked out unofficially two weeks ago.

They had had enough of pitiful and unfair pay rates that meant some workers got just £4.46 an hour.

Porters at the Royal Inverclyde Hospital were the first to walk out. Drivers, catering staff and cleaners followed them.

The action soon spread to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, which is part of the same trust.

For four days workers employed by private contractors ISS (previously Initial Services) also joined the strike.

At its highest point over 500 workers were involved in the unofficial strike.

After nine days the action forced bosses of the Clyde and Argyll Acute NHS trust, which had previously refused to negotiate with workers, to cave in.

They agreed to give all trust employees a pay rise to a minimum of £5 an hour from 1 September this year.

That means a pay increase for the majority of the workers involved in the action.

Management also agreed to pay workers £5.18 an hour from 1 April next year.

On top of this management agreed to pay workers at Inverclyde Royal Hospital an extra £300 a year to settle previous grievances over pay and conditions.

The strike terrified manage-

"The strike had a huge impact on the running of the hospital"

ment. It had a huge impact on the running of the hospital, won massive local support and was spreading.

Strikers organised collections. In just one hour strikers collected £260 in Greenock town centre.

When laundry workers at Inverclyde walked out management was forced into serious negotiations with Unison representatives.

Action

As one striker said, "Management knew they could not cope once this happened. They also knew the majority of staff at the hospital were behind us."

Workers voted by a large majority to accept the offer at a mass meeting on Wednesday of last week.

Some of the workers, particularly the catering staff who are mostly on £5 an hour already, thought that they should have stayed out on strike for the full £5.18 an hour.

Some 37 workers voted to reject the deal and stay out for more.

All the workers, however, are proud of the action they have taken.

Many describe how important it was that they "did it themselves".

Their successful action fol-



WORKERS' UNOFFICIAL action won this fight

lows the victory of 300 workers at Glasgow Royal Infirmary against the multinational Sodexho.

At last week's mass meeting the head of Unison health in Scotland, Jim Devine, said that, along with the Sodexho workers, they had lit a bonfire in the fight against low pay.

But it was determined rank and file workers who, despite no official support from the union, fought and won.

Workers know that their fight against low pay is not done and dusted.

Unison is still negotiating for a similar deal for the 150 at the trust who work for ISS.

Workers need to keep up the pressure on Unison to make sure that these workers do not lose out.

They also need to make sure that Unison sticks to its promise to hold an official strike ballot if management fail to come up with the full £5.18 an hour next April.

Defend Phil Billows

Crucial fight to stop privatisation

CAMPAIGNERS in east London have stepped up their fight to defend trade union rights and to stop a massive privatisation scheme.

Over 40 people met on Thursday of last week to plan the campaign for the full reinstatement of Unison branch secretary Phil Billows (pictured right) at the Barts and Royal London NHS Trust.

Management suspended Phil from his job at the beginning of July and are now "investigating" his behaviour.

Campaigners are clear that this is an attack on the union. As Phil says, "This suspension is because of our union branch's opposition to PFI."

Workers across the trust are currently taking part in an indicative ballot organised by Unison on whether they are prepared to take strike action to defend Phil and the union.

Unison NEC member Yunus Bakhsh, who addressed the meeting, said that Phil had the full backing of the union, but he stressed that the key to winning the fight was "to mobilise the people with the real strength, the workers inside the hospital".

Maureen, who works in medical records, reported, "There is a good mood for a fight within the hospital."

"We had a section meeting in medical records. There were 29 people present and, apart from one abstention, everyone else voted that they would be



prepared to strike."

The meeting agreed to organise a "Defend Phil Billows, Defend the NHS" day on Thursday 12 September.

This is a week before the indicative ballot closes on Thursday 19 September.

They plan to hold mass petitioning, leafleting and stalls, and to encourage workers to collectively post their ballot papers.

This is a crucial fight against what will be one of the biggest PFI schemes in Britain.

■To get involved in the campaign or to send messages of support write to Unison Office, Barts and Royal London NHS Trust, Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BB. Phone the union office on 020 7601 8125 or Phil on 07957 562 037.

■Fax messages of condemnation to Paul White, chief executive of Barts and Royal London NHS Trust, on 020 7377 7931.

Stop the war

SOME 150 people from across the area around Halifax turned out to a public meeting of Calderdale Against the War on Wednesday of last week.

They heard Alice Mahon MP, John Rees of the Stop the War Coalition, and local Labour councillor Mohammed Najib declare their opposition to war on Iraq and their support for Palestine.

Other speakers were Neil Kingsnorth of CND and Paul Russell of the Bradford Socialist Alliance, who is a member of the Natfhe lecturers' union national executive.

People are now attempting to build a big turnout for the area for the 28 September demonstration in London against war on Iraq.

PAUL SUTCLIFFE

Meetings

THERE ARE Stop the War Coalition rallies taking place across the country in the build-up to the 28 September demonstration in London. Here are just a few of them. For more details of what's happening in your area phone 07951 235 915.

WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

BRISTOL: *Not In My Name* video introduced by Mike Marqusee, 7.30pm, Cube Cinema, Dove Street South (off Kings Square, near Jamaica Street).

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER SOUTHDAY: with Jeremy Corbyn, Lindsey German and *Not In My Name* video, 7.30pm, Labour Hall, Cambridge Road.

TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER HACKNEY: with Paul Foot (invited) and Asad Rehman, 7.30pm, Bullion Rooms (behind Hackney Empire). BIRMINGHAM: with Yvonne Ridley, Cole Morton, Mike Marqusee and *Not In My Name* video, 7.30pm, Cars Lane Church. KENSINGTON, CHELSEA & WESTMINSTER: with Tariq Ali, Lindsey German, councillor Pat Mason and civil rights lawyer Kevin Cobham, 7.30pm, Paddington Arts

Centre, Woodfield Road, London (Westbourne Park ☉).

THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER BURNLEY: with George Galloway, Yvonne Ridley and John Rees, 7.30pm, Friendship Centre, Burnley Lane Baptist Church Hall, Colne Road. ISLINGTON: with Lindsey German, Jeremy Corbyn and *Not In My Name* video, 7.30pm, Union Chapel, Compton Terrace (Highbury and Islington ☉). TWICKENHAM: *Not In My Name* video introduced by Chris Nineham, 7.30pm, Green Room, Etna Community Centre, 13 Rosslyn Street.

FRIDAY 20 SEPTEMBER BOLTON: with Asad Rehman, George Galloway and John Rees, 7.30pm, Central Library, Le Mons Crescent.

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER BRADFORD: with Lindsey German, Liz Davies and Shahedah Vawda, 3pm, Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road.

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER MERSEYSIDE: with Arthur Scargill, Lindsey German, Bruce Kent, Felicity Arbuthnot and Bob Wareing MP, 7.30pm, Gladstone Hotel, Liverpool (behind Lime Street ☉).

Council housing

PRESSURE FROM tenants, trade unionists, councillors and MPs is rattling the government in the fight for the future of council housing.

Deputy prime minister John Prescott has announced a review on "the way forward for housing capital finance".

Campaign organisation Defend Council Housing says:

"This major development follows on from our success in getting a new 'right to borrow' for councils included in the local government bill and extra money for housing allocated in the comprehensive spending review."

Prescott has been forced to at least raise the possibility of ending financial rules that prevent councils building, and properly repairing and refurbishing, council homes.

This shift is testament to the dogged campaigning by tenants and others around the country.

The landmark victories such as the rejection by Birmingham tenants of the government-backed plan to privatise their homes have played a big part.

But the government still

remains committed to privatising council housing.

As well as straightforward "transfer" to a housing company, the government is also pushing Private Finance Initiative deals and what it calls Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs).

ALMOs are a halfway stage on the road to wholesale council house privatisation.

The urgent need now is to up the pressure on the New Labour government.

Already 82 MPs have signed up to a parliamentary "early day motion" on the "case for council housing".

Local organisations should lobby their MPs.

They should also make submissions putting the case for council housing in the official consultation on Prescott's review, which ends on 18 October.

■For more details and advice on submissions write to Defend Council Housing, c/o PO Box 33519, London E8 4XW, phone 020 7987 9989, e-mail info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk or go to www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

Rail workers

DRIVERS ON First North Western (FNW) trains are due to strike for 48 hours next week after management broke off negotiations.

FNW boss Vernon Barker had the cheek to tell negotiators from the Aslef train drivers' union that "the dispute would not be settled until Christmas" if union district secretary Colin Smith continued to take part in the talks.

Aslef general secretary Mick Rix said:

"This is another disgraceful example of FNW attacks, not only on the integrity of our drivers, but on the integrity of an elected official of this union."

The union is now seeking talks with FNW's parent company, transport giant First Group.

Further action, planned for Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, can hurt the company.

The last two 48-hour strikes over pay and against unfair productivity demands shut First North Western's service in the north west of England.

WORKERS ON Arriva Trains Northern are appealing for solidarity as they move to escalate their long-running pay fight.

"Our fight is important for every rail worker and for other trade unionists," one guard told *Socialist Worker*. "Wider support can help us win."

■Phone 07764 796 222 for speakers at union and workplace meetings. Rush donations to Arriva Strike Fund, c/o RMT, 39 Chalton Street, London NW1 1JD.

Massey Ferguson

WORKERS AT the Massey Ferguson tractor plant in Coventry have voted by four to one in favour of strike action to stop the closure of the plant.

Members of both trade unions at the plant, the TGWU and Amicus-AEEU, have voted by four to one in favour of action.

They are furious at the decision by US company Agco, the plant's owner, to shut it.

Around 1,000 jobs will be lost if the plant closes. Workers will lose out on some of

Lecturers

THE RESULT of an appeal hearing into the sacking of Jim O'Donovan from his lecturing job at Glasgow's Central College of Commerce will be heard this week.

The college has targeted Jim, who is the national president of the EIS-CLA lecturers' union, and other union activists.

Lecturers at the college have said they will strike if Jim is not reinstated. At a recent public meeting over 100 union activists showed their support for Jim.

their pension entitlement.

Workers have rejected the company's proposed redundancy package.

One TGWU official said, "The strength of the vote in favour reflects the depth of anger that members feel."

"They feel let down by a company many have given their working lives to. This factory is their livelihood."

"Agco should be in no doubt that members are prepared to take strike action to protect their jobs and income."

Socialist Worker

BRADFORD ASIAN JAILED FOR 8½ YEARS

AMJID RASHID, aged 22, has received an outrageously long sentence of eight and a half years after pleading not guilty to taking part in last year's confrontations with the police in Bradford.

It is the longest sentence yet handed out by Bradford Crown Court to young Asian men who protected themselves from a threatened march by the National Front, and from the police.

Amjid is the first of about 100 men to plead not guilty.

His sentence, for riot, is higher even than those handed out in Northern Ireland for similar offences.

Judge Stephen Gullick has handed out most of the sentences in Bradford, and promised last year to give especially long sentences to those who dared to plead not guilty.

The court has been handing out sentences of four to six years in jail to Asian youths who threw stones.

Compare these to the sentences given to BNP Nazis.

Devices

Tony Lecomber, the BNP's deputy leader, was given a three-year sentence in 1985 for five offences under the Explosives Act including possession of home-made hand grenades and electronic timing devices.

Herman Ouseley, who published a report into the events in Bradford, said last week, "In comparison with how people have been treated in similar or worse cases the severe sentences handed out to the young people in Bradford are undeniably unfair and possibly racist."

The trials in Burnley of two dozen Asian men started on Monday of this week.

They are pleading not guilty to charges of violent disorder following attempts by white racists to break into the main Asian area of the town last year.

■ **Phone the Burnley campaign on 07930 869 895 and the Bradford campaign on 07966 215 696.**

Why did Kwame die?

A GHANAIAN man has died after being arrested by police and taken to Stoke Newington police station in Hackney, east London.

Kwame Wirdue was a 23 year old student in Britain. Police picked him up at a Sainsbury's in Dalston on Friday of last week.

He asked for medical attention after being put in a cell. The police doctor pronounced him fit.

Later on Kwame Wirdue again asked to see a doctor and police officers called an ambulance to take him to hospital.

He died of cardiomyopathy, a heart condition. He did not show any symptoms of a weak heart before being arrested.

Families of those who have died in police custody are shocked at another tragedy.

REFUGEE MURDERED IN SUNDERLAND

The bloody price of racist hatred

PEIMAN BAHMANI, a 29 year old Iranian refugee, was stabbed to death on Wednesday of last week. It happened on the street where he lived in Sunderland.

Peiman Bahmani arrived in Britain around two years ago after fleeing from persecution in Iran.

Under New Labour's refugee dispersal scheme he was forced to live in the run-down area of Hendon in Sunderland.

He wanted to build a new life in Britain. He had been given a work permit and was set to move to Brighton to start up a business the day after the attack.

But as an asylum seeker Peiman Bahmani was an object of hate for many politicians and the right wing press.

They have fed a climate of hysteria over refugees. This has fuelled a rise in racism.

The hysteria has given confidence to the Nazis in the British National Party (BNP).

The BNP stood in six wards in Sunderland in the elections in May. In two of these they got votes of 28 per cent and 19.7 per cent.

These wards encircle Thornholme ward in which Peiman Bahmani lived.

Racial harassment in the area has increased. Peiman Bahmani had complained of racist abuse in the run-up to his murder.

The house where Peiman lived had its windows broken just a week ago. Police have had nine separate records of racial attacks at his house.

Racists taunted mourners who attended a 200-strong vigil for Peiman Bahmani on Friday of last week. One said, "We got one and we're going to get another."

Ray Smith, who was taking pictures for *Socialist Worker*, reported, "I heard a

‘CAN you imagine how his elderly mother and father feel to see their son's dead body coming home to a place he left because he was in fear of his life?’

TAHRI KHAN, community activist in Sunderland. Peiman Bahmani's body is returning to Iran for his funeral

commotion towards the rear of the procession. An asylum seeker came running towards me.

“He had a look in his eyes that you see in foxes that are being hunted.

“He had a red mark on his cheek just below his eye. It was clearly visible.

“He told me a man had run into the crowd, punched him, and then pulled out a knife and said he was going to kill him.”

Verron Twnda, a refugee from Congo who was on the march, said, “The police and the government must help asylum seekers and protect us. The Home Office sent us here to Sunderland—we did not ask to come. We are not allowed to leave.”

Gabriel Kibale, also from Congo, added, “Many bad things happen to refugees in



Picture: RAY SMITH

REFUGEES IN Sunderland are distraught and angry after Peiman Bahmani's murder

Sunderland and no one does anything.

“I used to think that England was a safe country but I am not so sure now. Many people are very afraid.”

Many local people expressed their shock at Peiman Bahmani's murder to campaigners on an Anti Nazi League stall in Sunderland

last Saturday.

Up to 350 signatures were collected on a petition condemning the attack, and £40 was given in donations.

Their response is in contrast to that of the BBC. It continues to give the BNP favourable publicity. The Radio 4 *Today* programme interviewed the head of the

BNP youth group for five minutes on Tuesday.

But it gave no coverage to the Anti Nazi League carnival last weekend (see pages 4 and 5).

Amir Saeed, who lives locally, said, “We have to build bridges with local residents, and for black and white to unite against a tiny but

dangerous minority of racists. If we can do this then something good will have come out of this tragedy.”

■ **THE POLICE have charged three people in connection with the death. One is being charged with murder, racially aggravated assault and violent disorder.**

Don't be without Socialist Worker

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